

Article

Religion and Life Satisfaction of Polish Female Students Representing Roman Catholic Affiliation: Test of Empirical Model

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Abstract: Religion is an important factor of life satisfaction for adolescents. This relationship is complex and depends on religiousness indicators used, religious affiliation, sex, age, and some cultural aspects. The aim of the study was to examine whether positive religious coping moderates the relationships between religious practices, as well as God's support and life satisfaction. Additionally, the mediating role of religious commitment between faith and life satisfaction was tested. Methods: The sample in this study consisted of 315 Polish Roman Catholic female students. The following tools were used: the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSORFQ), the Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE), the Religious Support Scale (RSS), and two one-item measures regarding frequency of prayer and Mass attendance. Results: The moderating role of positive religious coping between prayer, as well as God's support and life satisfaction, was confirmed. Additionally, positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance mediated between faith and life satisfaction. Conclusion: The research has proven that faith negatively influenced adolescents' life satisfaction both directly and indirectly through positive religious coping and Mass attendance. A beneficial indirect effect of faith on life satisfaction through God's support and prayer was confirmed. It was also found that using positive religious coping with an above-average frequency of religious practices improved the life satisfaction among female students.

Keywords: faith; religious practices; religious coping; God's support; life satisfaction; mediating variable; moderator variable



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1. Introduction

In the literature, the relationship between religiousness and mental health, as well as subjective wellbeing, is an area of advanced investigation (AbdAleati et al. 2016; Park 2007; Cohen and Koenig 2003). Due to the multidimensional nature of religiousness constructs, some religious dimensions are negatively related—or not related—to subjective wellbeing, while others positively influence some wellbeing aspects (Hall et al. 2008). In this study, religiousness was defined as an individual's conviction, devotion, and veneration toward a divinity (Gallagher and Tierney 2013). In addition, subjective wellbeing is a multidimensional concept consisting of the cognitive dimension measured by global life satisfaction and affective aspects regarding positive and negative affectivity (Diener 1984). Satisfaction with life was defined as a global, conscious assessment of one's life compared to self-imposed standards (Diener et al. 1985). Results of research have led to the realization that religiousness is more often correlated with life satisfaction than with affectivity (Wnuk 2017). According to the literature, religious orientation can be a moderator in the relationship between religiousness and specific positive outcomes. Recent research has indicated that intrinsic religiosity is positively related to meaning in life (Hui and Fung 2008; Francis et al. 2010), forgiveness (Sandage and Harden 2011), gratitude (McCullough et al. 2004; Sandage and Harden 2011), and positive affect (Steffen et al. 2015).

Intrinsic religiosity has been found to be negatively correlated with negative affect (Steffen et al. 2015), while extrinsic religiosity is not connected (Hui and Fung 2008) or negatively tied with meaning in life (Francis et al. 2010) and gratitude (McCullough et al. 2004). It is related to neither positive nor negative affect (Steffen et al. 2015). In addition, quest religious orientation did not predict gratitude and forgiveness (Sandage and Harden 2011) and was negatively correlated with life satisfaction (Gauthier et al. 2006).

Other potential religious moderators between religiousness and positive outcomes were tested. In a Wnuk (2021) study, positive religious coping was explored as a potential moderator in relationships between religious faith and some wellbeing aspects, proving that religious commitment variables moderate relationships between faith and meaning in life, as well as hope. It means that religious faith leads to positive outcomes but only among religiously committed students.

Relationships between religiousness and subjective wellbeing are more complicated and depend not only on measures used (Poloma and Pendleton 1990), religious affiliation (Ngamaba and Soni 2018), and sex (Gauthier et al. 2006; Lazar 2015), but also on some cultural factors (Diener et al. 2011; Lun and Bond 2013). For example, religious people are satisfied with life in religious nations just as nonreligious individuals declare higher life satisfaction in nonreligious nations (Diener et al. 2011; Stavrova et al. 2013; Graham and Crown 2014). In addition, the process of the socialization of religious faith has an impact on the relationship between religiousness and life satisfaction (Lun and Bond 2013). In nations where the socialization of religious faith is more prevalent, religious practices are positively correlated with life satisfaction. In nations where religious socialization is less common, however, the relationship between religious practices and life satisfaction is negative (Lun and Bond 2013).

Recent research has confirmed that religion can play a positive role in human life, leading to better mental health and higher subjective wellbeing through finding meaning in life (Stewart et al. 2017; Giannone et al. 2019; Wnuk and Marcinkowski 2014; Krok 2015) and positive emotions such as hope (Wnuk and Marcinkowski 2014; Nell and Rothmann 2018), optimism (Cheadle et al. 2018; Aglozo et al. 2021), gratitude (Jang et al. 2018; Kane et al. 2021), and forgiveness (Jang et al. 2018; Sharma and Singh 2019; Kane et al. 2021) through social support (Nooney and Woodrum 2002; Holt et al. 2005), as well as effective coping (Holt et al. 2005).

Next to secular mediating variables in the religiousness–wellbeing relationship, religious mediators have tested variables such as religious coping (Schaefer and Gorsuch 1991; Watlington and Murphy 2006; Nooney and Woodrum 2002; Fabricatore et al. 2004) and prayer (Maltby et al. 1999; Ai et al. 2005). Most of them have proven that among religious individuals, faith is a resource used to promote effective coping with stressful life events, and this leads to positive outcomes.

The aim of the study was to verify the relationships between some aspects of religiousness and the life satisfaction of Polish female students, taking into consideration the complexity of this relationship, potential religious mediators, and positive religious coping as a moderator between God's support, as well as religious practices and life satisfaction.

2. Religion and Wellbeing Relationships

Many studies have shown the beneficial effect of religion in adolescence (Hardy et al. 2019). Religion can be an effective source with students' struggles in daily life stress. Religious coping is approached as a complex process to confront stressful situations, and it cannot be reduced to simple behavioral indicators or defense mechanisms such as rationalization or denial. It consists of both active and passive, as well as problem-focused and emotion-focused, in addition to intrapsychic and interpersonal coping with stress strategies (Klaassen et al. 2006). Religious coping has five elementary functions. It facilitates finding the meaning and purpose of the situation. Using religious coping leads to a growing sense of control over events. It has a positive impact on the increase in the sense of comfort through achievement of God's closeness, leading to a feeling of intimate

contact with God and other human beings and finally having a positive influence on the transformation process of an individual (Hill et al. 2000).

According to Pargament's systematics, religious coping consists of positive and negative religious confrontation with stress (Pargament et al. 2000). Positive religious coping is the way of coping through using positive references of God, faith, and religion, such as looking for a stronger connection to God or God's love. Negative religious coping consists of negative references to God and religion, such as questioning God's love and power or feeling punished by God for a lack of devotion (Pargament et al. 2011). Recent research has indicated that using positive religious coping improves students' subjective wellbeing and mental health (Terreri and Glenwick 2013). For example, in a sample of Muslim university students from Israel/Palestine, Turkey, and Malaysia, positive religious coping was positively related to life satisfaction (Abu-Raiya et al. 2019). In a sample of African American adolescents, positive religious coping was positively connected with life satisfaction (Shannon et al. 2013). In addition, among Korean American adolescent members of the Catholic Church, positive religious coping predicted life satisfaction (Kim et al. 2013).

Both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have confirmed the positive impact of religious activities on life satisfaction (Headey et al. 2010). In a sample of German citizens, a beneficial effect was seen from those who had become more religious over time in comparison to the negative effect on those who had become less religious over time (Headey et al. 2010). According to achieved results for religious people, religious practices can be an effective route that leads to life satisfaction. For example, among Roman Catholic pastoral workers, the frequency of prayer, confession, spiritual activities, and private prayers was positively related to life satisfaction. Additionally, frequency of prayer negatively correlated with some negative indicators of psychosomatic health, such as depression, somatization, anxiety, and perceived stress (Büssing et al. 2016). In a sample of Australian citizens representing Christian denominations who attended religious services, a positive correlation with life satisfaction was seen (Kortt et al. 2015). Leondari and Gialamas (2009) found that the frequency of church attendance was positively correlated with life satisfaction among Greek Orthodox Christians, most of whom were students. God's support and strength of faith are also important factors for life satisfaction (Yi and Bjorck 2014; Lazar and Bjorck 2008; Wnuk 2017). Among Protestant Christian Korean American adults, both God's support and religious attendance were positively related to life satisfaction and negatively correlated with depression (Yi and Bjorck 2014). In a Lazar and Bjorck (2008) study among religious Jewish individuals, God's support positively correlated with life satisfaction and perceived health, and it was negatively tied with depression and anxiety. In this study, God's support was operationalized by individuals' conviction having worth in the eyes of God, God being a source of the sense of belonging, feeling close to God, as well being appreciated by God and his assistance when something goes wrong (Fiala et al. 2002). In a sample of Chilean students representing different religious affiliations, a positive correlation was noticed between the strength of religious faith and life satisfaction (Wnuk 2017).

According to research conducted in 2018, Poland is a very religious country (<https://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/> (accessed on 20 June 2021)). A total of 96% of the population have declared an affiliation to Christianity, the highest result in all of Europe. In the opinion of 64% of Poles, Christianity is an important component of their nationality. It is connected with involvement in public and private religious practices. The attendance of religious services at least monthly was found among 61% of Poles, the highest indicator of all European countries. Daily praying was declared among 27% of the Polish population (<https://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/> (accessed on 20 June 2021)).

Additionally, the level of support for religious socialization in Poland is relatively high (Lun and Bond 2013). This leads to an expectation that—in a sample of Roman Catholic Polish women—students' positive religious indicators should be positively related with subjective wellbeing measured by cognitive measures such as life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *In a sample of Polish female students, religious faith, positive religious coping, God's support, and religious practices are positively correlated with life satisfaction.*

3. Religion and Wellbeing—Positive Religious Coping as a Moderator

Relationships between religion and wellbeing are complex and inconsistent. Some religious measures influence wellbeing indicators in an interacting way (Dowson and Miner 2015). This means that some religious variables moderate the relationship between religion and wellbeing. For example, in a sample of Australian church leaders, buffering effects of intrinsic religious orientation on the negative relationship were noticed between quest orientation and psychological wellbeing (Dowson and Miner 2015). In a Wnuk (2021) study religious faith was positively correlated with hope—with regard to life and gratitude—and negatively related to the tendency to avoid transgressors; this only applied to a group of students who used positive religious coping on an average basis or more frequently than the average. In a group of students using positive religious coping on a less-than-average basis, this relationship was not statistically significant (Wnuk 2021). In a Bjorck and Kim (2009) study conducted on Protestant college students participating in two-month mission trips to various destinations, a moderating effect of positive religious coping on the God's support–life satisfaction relationship was noticed. For the group of students who scored low in positive religious coping, God's support was negatively related to life satisfaction. The opposite effect was observed among students scoring high in positive religious coping. In this group, God's support had a beneficial effect and positively influenced life satisfaction.

In addition, the prayer frequency–subjective wellbeing relationship can be moderated by other religious variables such as prayer content, prayer type, spiritual maturity, and understanding of prayer (Masters and Spielmans 2007), in addition to prayer duration and belief in prayer (Lazar 2015). For example, in a sample of religious Jewish Israeli adults, sex, prayer duration, and belief in prayer had an impact on different types of prayers and life satisfaction relationships (Lazar 2015). A moderating effect was observed only in the group of women. For most types of prayers, females strongly believed in the power of prayer and prayed for longer periods of time, leading to a higher life satisfaction. The opposite, detrimental effect was present in females with weak belief in the power of prayer and who prayed for shorter periods of time. In their case, prayer was negatively related to life satisfaction.

Based on this example, it is expected that—among female students—positive religious coping moderates the relationships between God's support and life satisfaction, as well as religious practices and life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *In a sample of Polish female students, positive religious coping moderates the relationships between God's support, prayer, Mass attendance, and life satisfaction.*

It is expected that in a group of students with an average and more-than-average use of positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance are positively correlated with life satisfaction. Among female students who scored lower than average on positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance are not related or negatively correlated with their life satisfaction.

4. Religion and Wellbeing—Mediating Role of Religious Commitment

In explaining wellbeing and mental health, the complex relationships between religious variables were presented in a multivariate belief-motivation theory of religiousness (Schaefer and Gorsuch 1991). According to its assumptions, religious belief reflects in the positive image of God, as well as intrinsic religiosity (Allport and Ross 1967), indirectly

through the religious problem-solving style, influencing psychological adjustment. In a sample of Protestant students, positive religious coping mediated the relationship between religious belief and anxiety (Schaefer and Gorsuch 1991). In research conducted on undergraduate students by Fabricatore et al. (2004), religiousness indirectly through collaborative religious coping positively influenced wellbeing, including satisfaction with life and positive affect and reduced distress measured by symptomatology and negative affect. In the Roesch and Ano (2003) study, spiritually based coping was mediated between intrinsic religious orientation and depression, as well as spiritual growth. Additionally, intrinsic religious orientation positively predicted support from the other members of the church, which also increased spiritual growth.

Other religious commitment variables were tested as a mediator between religious orientation, as well as faith and wellbeing.

Based on a literature review, Hollywell and Walker (2009) presented a conclusion that prayer seems to be a coping action that mediates between religious faith and wellbeing. In an Ai et al. (2005) study, prayer as a coping strategy mediated the relationship between faith and spiritual support, and it indirectly influenced the positive attitude consisting of hope and optimism. In separate regression analyses among a sample of 474 college students from the United Kingdom, frequency of prayer predicted depression, trait anxiety, and self-esteem; religious orientation relationships with these variables became statistically insignificant, which implies that a stronger religious orientation leads to more frequent prayer, which, in turn, reduces anxiety and depression while improving self-esteem (Maltby et al. 1999).

In a sample of Polish female students, stronger faith should be positively related to more religious commitment such as greater God's support, more frequent prayer, Mass attendance, and using positive religious coping. In turn, these factors should improve their life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *In a sample of Polish female students, God's support, prayer, Mass attendance, and religious coping mediate between strength of religious faith and life satisfaction.*

5. Materials and Methods

5.1. Participants

The surveys were handed out and completed during classes. The participants in the study consisted of 393 students of physiotherapy, rehabilitation, and public health. They expressed their consent to take part in the study. Due to the controlling of religious affiliation, sex, and age from the study sample participants—other than Roman Catholic denominations—male students, as well as individuals over the age of 40, were excluded. The sample finally consisted of 315 female students with Roman Catholic affiliation. As much as 93% of the participants had secondary education and 7% had higher education. The largest group of participants, making up 89.9% of the sample, were between the ages of 20 and 30. A total of 10.1% were between the ages of 31 and 40.

5.2. Measures

Strength of religious faith was measured by the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSORFQ).

Religious commitment indicators were positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance. Positive religious coping was measured by the Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE), God's support was measured by the Religious Support Scale (RSS), and prayer, as well as Mass attendance, was measured through one-item scales regarding the frequency of these religious practices.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was used to verify cognitive aspects of subjective wellbeing.

Strength of religious faith. The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire is a measure regarding faith independent of religious affiliation. It consists of 10 items, which

participants respond to on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Factor analysis confirmed the one-dimensional structure of this measure, which was called the strength of religious faith (Lewis et al. 2001; Wnuk 2017). The reliability of the scale is $\alpha = 0.94$ – 0.96 (Plante and Boccaccini 1997a, 1997b; Wnuk 2017).

Prayer. The frequency of prayer was measured using a one-item questionnaire regarding how often the participants prayed, which consisted of never (1), sometimes (2), once monthly (3), once weekly (4), and every day (5).

Mass attendance. The frequency of participation in Mass was measured based on a 5-point scale for how often a given individual attended Mass. This consisted of (1) never, (2) one to two times a year, (3) three to six times a year, (4) once a month, (5) two to three times a month, and (6) two or more times a week.

Positive religious coping. The Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE) consists of 14 items in reference to positive and negative religious coping. Each question has a 4-point scale depending on how much the individual agrees or disagrees with the question. The more points scored, the more references to religious content in the coping process are used. The scale's reliability, depending on population, ranges from $\alpha = 0.78$ to 0.94 (Pargament et al. 2000). In the present study, only the items regarding positive religious coping were used.

Religious support. The Religious Support Scale (RSS) is a measure consisting of 21 items regarding three dimensions of religious support: congregational support, church leader support, and God's support (Fiala et al. 2002). Each subscale has one negatively worded item and six positively worded items, with each item rated on a 5-point scale (1—strongly disagree, 5—strongly agree). The scale's reliability via the α -Cronbach coefficient was 0.91 for congregational support, 0.75 for God's support, and 0.9 for church leader support (Fiala et al. 2002). In the present study, only the items regarding God's support were used.

Satisfaction with life. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a universally recognized tool used to measure one's cognitive aspect of subjective wellbeing (Diener et al. 1985). This measure consists of five statements that are graded according to a seven-point scale. According to this measure, the greater the points, the more satisfied the respondent is with life. This scale possesses satisfactory psychometric properties. Its reliability is 0.83 as determined by the test–retest method after a two-week repeated study; this rose to 0.84 after a month and subsequently ranged between 0.64 and 0.82 after two months (Pavot and Diener 2008).

5.3. Statistical Analyses

All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS statistics software (version 27.0). Relationships between research variables were measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

To verify the potential moderating effect of positive religious coping on relationships between God's support and prayer, as well as Mass attendance and life satisfaction, the Process macro in SPSS was used (Hayes 2018). Three single regression models were tested. In every linear regression, model number 1 of the Process macro, with probe interactions on -1 standard deviation (-1 SD), mean, and $+1$ standard deviation ($+1$ SD), and the Johnson–Neyman output were used. Probe interactions on -1 SD, mean, and $+1$ SD are three points along the scale of the (continuous) moderator variable (W) conventionally chosen to represent “low,” “medium,” and “high” values of that variable (see, e.g., Aiken and West 1991). Using the Johnson–Neyman output, the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) can be probed for regions of significance across levels on the (assumed continuous) moderator variable (W).

The potential mediating role of religious commitment—of which the indicators were positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance—between faith and life satisfaction was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The distribution of research variables was close to the normal distribution (results of skewness and kurtosis

were in the range of $-2;2$), so the maximum likelihood method was used. The following model fit indicators were used: normed fit index (NFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Two models were tested with a direct effect of faith on life satisfaction (see Figure 1) and without a direct effect of this variable on life satisfaction. Figure 1 does not contain a marked path between positive religious coping and Mass attendance, which was not statistically significant in either of the tested models.

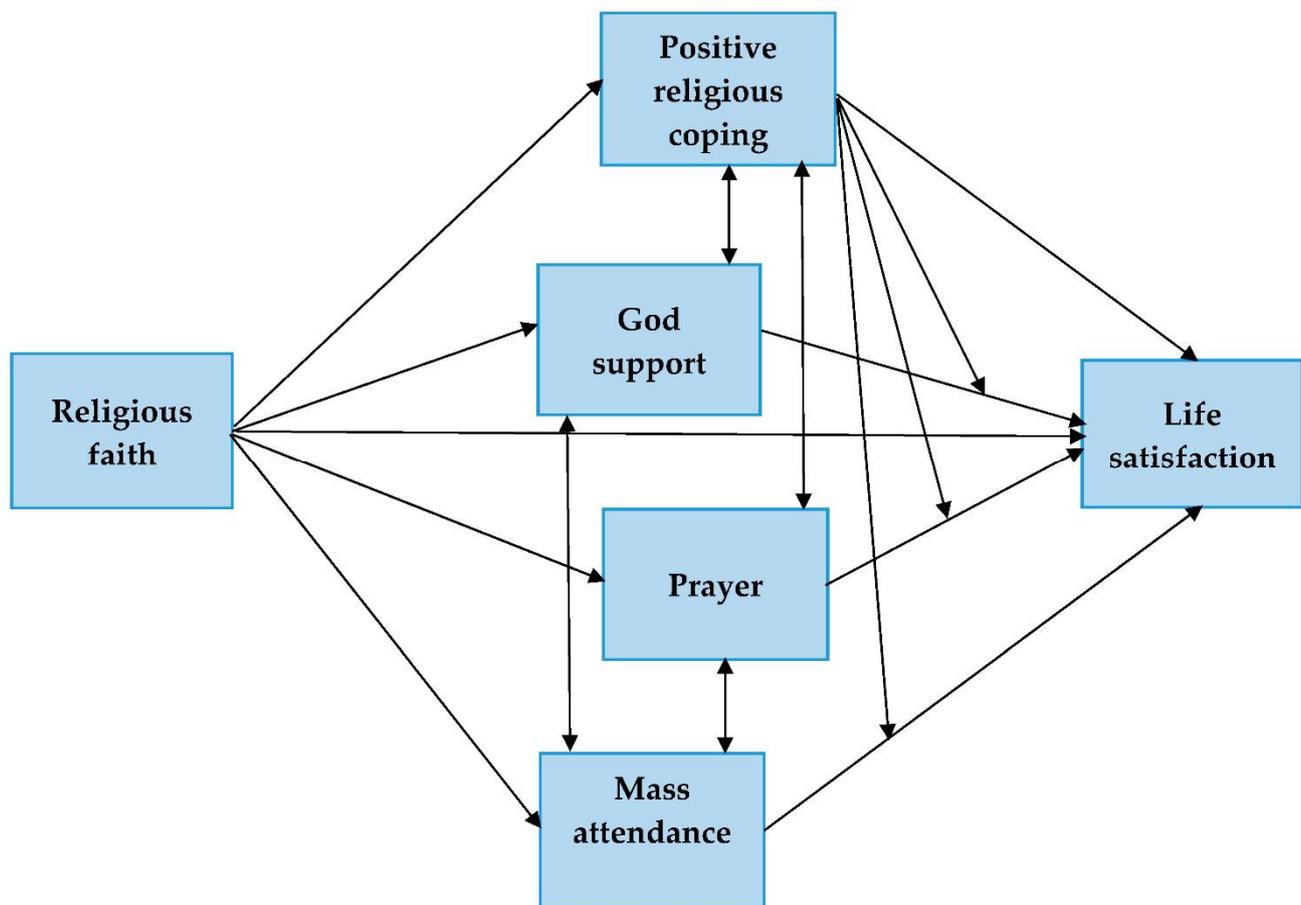


Figure 1. Model of research.

6. Results

Descriptive statistics of research variables are shown in Table 1. The results of the r-Pearson value coefficients are presented in Table 2. All religious variables were positively intercorrelated. Among these correlations, only the relationship between religious faith and religious support was strong. The rest were moderate aside from the association between positive religious coping and prayer, which was weak. It is especially important in the case of the intercorrelation between potential mediators, which should not be strong (Hayes 2018). Additionally, it served as proof that different aspects of religiousness were tested as potential mediators. Religious faith, religious support, and prayer were positively correlated with life satisfaction, while frequency of Mass attendance was not correlated with this variable. Positive religious coping was negatively and weakly associated with life satisfaction.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the study variables.

	SCSORFQ	Brief RCOPE	RSS	Prayer	Mass Attendance	SWLS
<i>N</i>	315	315	315	315	315	315
Mean	35.55	18	25.16	3.38	3.33	16.23
<i>SD</i>	8.36	5.24	5.65	1.44	1.45	3.5
Skewness	−0.47	0.02	−0.68	−0.04	−0.26	−0.43
Kurtosis	−0.34	−0.13	0.34	−1.67	−1.4	1.05
Minimum	13	7	10	1	1	6
Maximum	50	28	35	5	6	24
Reliability	0.94	0.87	0.82	-	-	0.72

(Source: author's research). SCSORFQ—Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire; Brief RCOPE—Brief Religious Coping Scale; RSS—Religious Support Scale; SWLS—Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Table 2. Correlation matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Life satisfaction					
2. Strength of religious faith	0.21 **				
3. Positive religious coping	−0.13 *	0.62 **			
4. God's support	0.53 **	0.82 **	0.41 **		
5. Prayer	0.27 **	0.59 **	0.26 **	0.56 **	
6. Mass attendance	0.02	0.63 **	0.44 **	0.61 **	0.48 **

(Source: author's research). * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$.

The results of the interactional effect of the independent variables and moderators—such as positive religious coping—on dependent variables such as life satisfaction are presented in Table 3. The results of the probe interactions with the Johnson–Neyman output are presented in Table 4 for the interactional effect of positive religious coping and God's support, in Table 5 for the interactional effect of positive religious coping and frequency of prayer, and in Table 6 for the interactional effect of positive religious coping and frequency of Mass attendance.

Table 3. Results of moderation analyses for life satisfaction as an outcome (dependent) variable.

Moderating Variable	Interaction Effect	Coefficient	SE	t	<i>p</i>	95% CL	
						Low	High
Positive religious coping	God's support × Positive religious coping	0.128	0.037	3.47	0.0006	0.0055	0.0200
Positive religious coping	Prayer × Positive religious coping	0.137	0.021	6.487	0.0000	0.0953	0.1783
Positive religious coping	Mass attendance × Positive religious coping	0.047	0.024	1.947	0.0524	−0.0005	0.0946

(Source: author's research).

Table 4. Conditional effects of positive religious coping as a moderator for relationship between God's support and life satisfaction.

	Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
12.76 (−1 SD)	0.348	0.038	9.095	0.0000	0.2728	0.4234
17.99 (M)	0.415	0.029	14.149	0.0000	0.3573	0.4727
23.23 (+1 SD)	0.482	0.031	15.242	0.0000	0.4197	0.5442

(Source: author's research). LLCI = 95% confidence interval (low); ULCI = 95% confidence interval (high).

Table 5. Conditional effects of positive religious coping as a moderator for relationship between frequency of prayer and life satisfaction.

	Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
12.76 (−1 SD)	−0.021	0.178	−0.1197	0.9048	−0.3711	0.3285
17.99 (M)	0.695	0.127	5.473	0.0000	0.4452	0.9449
23.23 (+1 SD)	1.41	0.158	8.92	0.0000	1.100	1.722

(Source: author's research). LLCI = 95% confidence interval (low); ULCI = 95% confidence interval (high).

Table 6. Conditional effects of positive religious coping as a moderator for relationship between frequency of Mass attendance and life satisfaction.

	Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
12.76 (−1 SD)	−0.032	0.202	−0.161	0.8727	−0.4293	0.3646
17.99 (M)	0.201	0.150	1.426	0.1538	−0.0812	0.5092
23.23 (+1 SD)	0.460	0.191	2.415	0.0163	0.0853	0.8355

(Source: author's research). LLCI = 95% confidence interval (low); ULCI = 95% confidence interval (high).

There was a noticeable moderating effect of positive religious coping on God's support and life satisfaction, as well as frequency of prayer and life satisfaction (see Table 3). The moderating influence of positive religious coping on the frequency of Mass attendance and life satisfaction relationship was close to statistically significant (see Table 3). For female students who used positive religious coping on a less-than-average basis, this beneficial effect of God's support for their life satisfaction was weaker than in the group of students who used religious coping on an average basis. In turn, the largest effect of God's support on life satisfaction was noticed among female students who used positive religious coping more often than the average (see Table 4).

In a group of female students who used positive religious coping on a less-than-average basis, prayer was not related to life satisfaction. A positive effect of prayer on life satisfaction was noticed in female students using positive religious coping on an average or above-average basis (see Table 5). Additionally, the beneficial influence of Mass attendance on life satisfaction was proven only in the group of female students who used religious coping on an above-average basis (see Table 6).

Results of fit indicators for model one with strength of religious faith as a predictor of life satisfaction (see Figure 1) were well-fitted. The values of RMSEA = 0.055 (90% CI [0.000, 0.171]), NFI = 0.999, GFI = 0.998, CFI = 0.999, $\chi^2 = 1.94$, $df = 1$, and $p = 0.164$ (CMIN/ $df = 1.939$) indicated that the fit between the measurement model and the data was acceptable. The RMSEA indicator was less than the recommended level, which should not exceed 0.08 (Wang and Wang 2012). The level of NFI was above the recommended level at 0.90, which should exceed 0.90 in similarity to the GFI (0.90) and CFI (0.93) (Steiger 1990). In addition to this, the values of CMIN/ df statistics were lower than the required standard of 2 or 3 (Byrne 1994). The comparable model without a path between religious faith and life satisfaction was not well-fitted—RMSEA = 0.185 (90% CI [0.123, 0.256]), NFI = 0.979, GFI = 0.976, CFI = 0.98, $\chi^2 = 23.59$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.000$ (CMIN/ $df = 11.799$). One path with prayer and life satisfaction was not statistically significant (beta = 0.056, $p = 0.250$).

Additionally, the values of CMIN/df statistics were much larger than the required standard (Byrne 1994), as well as values of RMSEA (Wang and Wang 2012).

According to model 1, religious faith negatively predicted life satisfaction (CL 95% (−0.571; −0.236), $\beta = -0.413$, $p < 0.001$). Indirectly, religious faith through religious commitment positively influenced life satisfaction (CL 95% (0.451; 0.786), $\beta = 0.615$, $p < 0.001$). The positive indirect effect of faith on life satisfaction was greater than that of the direct effect. Faith was a positive predictor of positive religious coping (CL 95% (0.546; 0.685), $\beta = 0.622$, $p < 0.002$), God's support (CL 95% (0.780; 0.853), $\beta = 0.819$, $p < 0.001$), frequency of Mass attendance (CL 95% (0.564; 0.695), $\beta = 0.635$, $p < 0.000$), and frequency of prayer (CL 95% (0.515; 0.661), $\beta = 0.594$, $p < 0.000$). Positive religious coping negatively predicted life satisfaction (CL 95% (−0.305; −0.102), $\beta = -0.205$, $p < 0.001$), and this also applied to frequency of Mass attendance (CL 95% (−0.471; −0.267), $\beta = -0.367$, $p < 0.000$). God's support was a positive predictor of life satisfaction (CL 95% (0.976; 1.243), $\beta = 1.101$, $p < 0.000$), as well as frequency of prayer (CL 95% (0.027; 0.222), $\beta = 0.125$, $p < 0.017$).

The Gaskin et al. (2020) Plugin in AMOS was used to identify the strength of indirect effects of faith on life satisfaction for all mediators such as positive religious coping, God's support, Mass attendance, and prayer.

The mediating effect of religious faith on female students' life satisfaction for positive religious coping as a mediator was (CL 95% (−0.078; −0.033), $\beta = -0.128$, $p < 0.001$), for the God's support (CL 95% (0.331; 0.425), $\beta = 0.902$, $p < 0.001$), for the Mass attendance (CL 95% (−0.124; −0.073), $\beta = -0.233$, $p < 0.001$), and for the prayer (CL 95% (0.010; 0.050), $\beta = 0.074$, $p < 0.018$).

7. Discussion

The aim of the study was to examine the complex relationships between some different aspects of religiousness and life satisfaction of Polish female students as controlled by sex, religious affiliation, age, and education. All participants were Polish females with Roman Catholic affiliation, mostly between 20 and 30 years old with secondary education. According to hypothesis 1, all religiousness indicators were related to female students' life satisfaction. This hypothesis was only partially confirmed. According to recent research, both God's support and prayer positively correlated with life satisfaction (Büssing et al. 2016; Yi and Bjorck 2014; Lazar and Bjorck 2008). Inconsistent with the previous results of research, strength of faith, positive religious coping, and Mass attendance were negatively related to life satisfaction (Terrerri and Glenwick 2013; Wnuk 2017; Abu-Raiya et al. 2019; Shannon et al. 2013; Kim et al. 2013). This implies that, in the sample of Polish female Roman Catholic students, relationships between religiousness and life satisfaction are not moderated by the level of nation religiousness, where research participants came from, as well as the relevance of the process of socialization of religious faith (Diener et al. 2011; Lun and Bond 2013; Stavrova et al. 2013; Graham and Crown 2014), but depend on the level of God's support they feel.

The achieved results showed the complexity of associations between religiousness and life satisfaction, facilitating some explanations of potential inconsistencies to previous research. The obtained results mostly confirmed Hypothesis 2 regarding the moderating role of positive religious coping in relationships, specifically those occurring among religious practices, as well as God's support and life satisfaction. In line with the Bjorck and Kim (2009) study, positive religious coping moderated the relationship between God's support and life satisfaction. Inconsistent with that study was the finding that revealed a beneficial effect of God's support on female students' life satisfaction; this was observed not only in the group of participants who used positive religious coping on an above-average basis. It is worth noting that this positive effect was strongest in students using positive religious coping more often and weakest in students using positive religious coping less often. This implies that among Polish female students, the feeling of God's support improved their life satisfaction through more frequent positive references to God and faith in stressful

situations. Positive religious coping moderated the relationship between prayer and life satisfaction. However, in reference to the relation between Mass attendance's moderating effect of positive religious coping, the result was slightly below the statistically significant level. On the other hand, the beneficial effect of Mass attendance on life satisfaction was noticed in the group of female students who used positive religious coping more often than the average amount. In the other two groups (average Mass attendance and less-than-average Mass attendance), this effect was not observed. The results imply that for all female students, Mass attendance negatively correlated with life satisfaction. However, in the group of students with above-average use of positive religious coping, this correlation was positive. A varied result among all female students was prayer, and it was positively related to life satisfaction. In the group of students using positive religious coping on an average and above-average basis, the correlations were positive. In the group of students using this coping style on a less-than-average basis, this relationship was not statistically significant.

Additionally, Hypothesis 3 was totally confirmed in regard to the mediating role of religious commitment between faith and life satisfaction. This effect was noticed for each religious commitment indicator. A stronger religious faith of female students led to a greater God's support, more positive religious coping use, more frequent Mass attendance, and prayer. In turn, God's support and prayer predicted satisfaction with life. However, positive religious coping and Mass attendance had a negative impact on life satisfaction. It is important to emphasize that religious faith was a negative predictor of female students' life satisfaction. Religious faith also indirectly influenced students' life satisfaction, negatively—through positive religious coping and Mass attendance—and positively—through prayer and God's support.

The strength of the beneficial effect was larger than the strength of the negative effect. God's support, in particular, was a result of faith and was important for improving female students' life satisfaction, explaining more than 80% of the indirect effect of positive faith on life satisfaction. An indirect positive effect through prayer was very low for all female students. The positive impact of prayer on life satisfaction was greater in students who used positive religious coping on an average or above-average basis.

Similar to recent research, positive religious coping mediated between faith and life satisfaction; inconsistent with the previous research was the struggle with stress by means of God, and its negative—rather than positive—influence in relation to life satisfaction (Schaefer and Gorsuch 1991; Fabricatore et al. 2004; Roesch and Ano 2003). This inconsistency can be explained based on the interactional influence of positive religious coping, God's support, prayer, and Mass attendance on life satisfaction. It is important to note that positive religious coping was a weak negative predictor of life satisfaction; the research sample was differentiated, taking into consideration the religious commitment–life satisfaction relationship. In simple words, positive religious coping can be positively related to life satisfaction among the group of female students who had above-average prayer and Mass attendance frequency and felt a greater God's support. On the opposite side of the spectrum, it can be negatively correlated with life satisfaction among individuals with average or less-than-average prayer and Mass attendance frequency who felt little or no God's support. Future research can potentially verify these findings.

It is possible that a more frequent search for God's help is a characteristic of these female students who are under more stressful circumstances and less satisfied with life. Perhaps female students who are more satisfied with life have no reasons to use religious coping because they are potentially not vulnerable to stress. They may also be successful in their struggle with stress using secular ways of coping.

The results of this study lead to a number of theoretical and practical implications. First, a mediating role was confirmed surrounding religious commitment operationalized by religious practices, positive religious coping, and God's support between faith and life satisfaction of Roman Catholic female students from Poland. The positive indirect effect of faith on life satisfaction through prayer and God's support was larger than the added negative direct effect of faith on life satisfaction and the negative indirect effect of faith on

life satisfaction through positive religious coping, as well as Mass attendance. In addition, a positive role of religious practices for life satisfaction was confirmed, but this was only present in reference to prayer among groups of students with average or above-average positive religious coping use; this also applied in reference to Mass attendance, but only in students with above-average positive religious coping use.

From a practical point of view, the achieved results are the incentive for educators and counselors to encourage Roman Catholic female students to religious commitment, specifically reflected in the search for God's support and prayer as important positive predictors of life satisfaction. Suggestions to pursue struggles with daily stress through frequent use of positive religious coping should be made to students to improve their life satisfaction, specifically those who are committed to religious practices such as prayer and Mass attendance.

8. Limitations and Future Research

This study had a several limitations.

First, the generalizability of the findings is limited to Polish females with Roman Catholic affiliations, mostly between 20 and 30 years old with secondary education. It is important to verify if similar or different findings can be confirmed among diverse racial/ethnic groups or in different cultural contexts (Diener et al. 2011; Lun and Bond 2013), especially in populations with low levels of religiousness (Diener et al. 2011; Stavrova et al. 2013; Graham and Crown 2014), relatively bad social conditions (Diener et al. 2011), and less prevalent religious socialization (Lun and Bond 2013).

It is also important to verify if the present findings can be generalized in a sample of adolescent men and individuals from different age groups such as children, older adults, and geriatric populations represented aside from Roman Catholic religious denominations (i.e., Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims). Diener et al. (2011) noticed that the religiousness–wellbeing relationships are independent of religious affiliation, but some authors have claimed that this depends on the religious measures used (Poloma and Pendleton 1990).

It would be interesting to verify these relationships using both cognitive and affective indicators of subjective wellbeing (Diener 1984) and religious orientation (Allport and Ross 1967), in addition to religious faith.

The cross-sectional nature of the research limits the interpretation of the results to correlations between variables and the potential direction of relationships between them.

The conducted study was cross-sectional—not longitudinal—which is why the described relationships cannot be explained from the cause-and-effect perspective. Other directions in the relationships between religious faith, religious commitment, and life satisfaction cannot be eliminated. It is possible that religious commitment—as an antecedent of strength of faith—can indirectly influence female students' life satisfaction.

Only longitudinal studies can provide unambiguous proofs confirming the direction of relationships between religiousness and life satisfaction.

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