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Exploring basic hope as a mediator between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being among Anglicans

Abstract

The current study examines the mediating role of basic hope in the relationship of attitudes towards religion with psychological well-being in a sample of Anglicans. Because previous research has indicated close associations among religiosity, hope and well-being, the aforementioned assumption is highly plausible. A total of 176 participants (89 women and 87 men) took part in this study. All were members of the Church of England who completed three questionnaires: the Post-Critical Belief Scale (PCBS), the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) and the Basic Hope Inventory (BHI-12). The results demonstrated that all four attitudes towards religion were associated with basic hope: orthodoxy and second naiveté were positively related to basic hope, while external critique and relativism were negatively related. In addition, basic hope was positively associated with psychological well-being. The main finding showed that basic hope turned out to mediate the relationships between the four attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being among Anglicans. Taken together, the findings highlight the important role of hope, which seems vital to the development of people's religious beliefs and well-being.

Keywords: attitudes to religion, basic hope, psychological well-being, Anglicanism.

Analiza nadziei podstawowej jako mediatora między postawami wobec religii a dobrostanem psychicznym wśród Anglikanów

Abstrakt

Celem niniejszego badania jest sprawdzenie mediacyjnej roli nadziei podstawowej w związku postaw wobec religii z dobrostanem psychicznym w próbie anglikanów. Ponieważ wcześniejsze badania wskazywały na bliskie związki między religijnością, nadzieją i dobrostanem, powyższe założenie jest wysoce prawdopodobne. W badaniu wzięło udział 176 osób (89 kobiet i 87 mężczyzn). Wszyscy byli członkami Kościoła anglikańskiego i wypełnili trzy kwestionariusze: Skalę Przekonań Postkrytycznych (PCBS), Skalę Dobrostanu Psychicznego (PWB) oraz Inwentarz Podstawowej Nadziei (BHI-12). Wyniki wykazały, że wszystkie cztery postawy wobec religii były związane z nadzieją podstawową: ortodoksja i wtórna ufność były pozytywnie związane z nadzieją podstawową, podczas gdy zewnętrzna krytyka i relatywizm były negatywnie powiązane. Ponadto nadzieja podstawowa była pozytywnie związana z dobrostanem psychicznym. Główne odkrycie pokazało, że nadzieja podstawowa okazała się

pośredniczyć w związkach pomiędzy czterema postawami wobec religii a dobrostanem psychicznym wśród anglikanów. Podsumowując: wyniki badań podkreślają ważną rolę nadziei, która wydaje się być kluczowa dla rozwoju przekonań religijnych i dobrostanu.

Słowa kluczowe: postawy wobec religii, nadzieja podstawowa, dobrostan psychiczny, anglikanizm.

1. Attitudes towards religion, psychological well-being and basic hope

Attitudes towards religion play a significant role in people's psychological and social functioning. The notion derives from the frequent observations supported by empirical studies that religious beliefs and behaviour can substantially influence the ways in which individuals think, feel and behave. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in examining relationships between religiosity and well-being, as well as their potential mediating mechanisms.¹ Although research has clearly demonstrated close links between religiosity and well-being, very few studies have examined the mediating role of basic hope in associations between specific attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being among members of the Church of England, which has its own unique religious and ecclesiastic tradition. This is all the more interesting because hope has strong links with the realm of religion. Therefore, the current study examines the relationship between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being in the mediation perspective of basic hope among Anglicans.

1.1. The model of attitudes towards religion

The concept of attitudes towards religion is an interesting example of the application of elements of cognitive psychology to the area of religiosity. Examining different approaches towards religion, Wulff proposed placing them within a two-dimensional space composed of two axes: (1) inclusion vs. exclusion of transcendence and (2) literal vs. symbolic interpretation.² The first dimension determines the degree to which religious objects are granted a place in transcendent reality (inclusion) or not (exclusion). In other words, it states whether or not people believe in a transcendent reality. The second dimension indicates the nature of the interpretation of religious content,

¹ Patty Van Cappellen, Maria Toth-Gauthier, Vassilis Saroglou, Barbara L. Fredrickson. 2016. "Religion and well-being: The mediating role of positive emotions". *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17 (2): 486; Swati Sharma, Kamlesh Singh. 2019. "Religion and well-being: The mediating role of positive virtues". *Journal of Religion and Health* 58 (1): 120; Peter J. Jankowski, Steven J. Sandage, David C. Wang, Sarah Crabtree. 2022. "Virtues as mediators of the associations between religious/spiritual commitment and well-being". *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 1: 2–3.

² David M. Wulff. 1991. *Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary views*. New York: Wiley, 650–652.

which can be understood either literally (literal) or metaphorically (symbolic). Both dimensions can be orthogonally aligned, which enables us to distinguish four basic attitudes towards religion: (1) literal affirmation or orthodoxy; (2) literal disaffirmation or external critique; (3) symbolic disaffirmation or relativism; and finally, (4) symbolic affirmation or second naïveté. The above model was used by Hutsebaut in constructing the concept of post-critical beliefs and a related scale.³

Orthodoxy is characterised by thinking about religious issues in a literal way while taking into account the presence of transcendence. The person espousing this attitude acknowledges the existence of a transcendent reality and treats religious issues (biblical content, dogma) literally. Within this attitude, people define themselves as religious and interpret religious contents in an inflexible, closed-minded and dogmatic fashion.⁴ The content of the professed faith appears unambiguous, understandable and unchanging over time, with the consequence that the believers hold conservative views. From a psychological perspective, people who prefer this attitude are characterised by a desire to reduce uncertainty and fear of something new and unknown.

External critique is defined by literal thinking about religious topics, but at the same by rejecting the existence of transcendence. People characterised by this attitude do not believe in a religious reality, but nevertheless interpret religious content literally. In other words, they deny the possibility of a transcendent reality on the basis of strict and literal arguments.⁵ Those who adopt this attitude often seek answers to their questions and find them in the humanities and sciences, in which most hypotheses can be proven empirically. It is a type of reductionist approach towards religion, with a simultaneous high level of uncertainty. This attitude is mainly related to the negative emotions experienced when dealing with religious content.

Relativism is expressed in the rejection of a transcendent reality while believing that religious issues may have hidden, symbolic meaning. Such people do not recognise transcendence, but, depending on the context, tend to think metaphorically about religion. This attitude characterises individuals who are non-religious, yet less judgmental and closed-minded towards religiosity compared to external critique.⁶ People who prefer this attitude may have extensive knowledge of religion and even

³ Dirk Hutsebaut. 1996. "Post-Critical Belief: A new approach of the religious attitude problem". *Journal of Empirical Theology* 9: 55–56; Dirk Hutsebaut. 2000. "Post-Critical belief scales". *Journal of Empirical Theology* 13 (2): 19–20; Bart Duriez, Johnny R.J. Fontaine, Dirk Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium". *Psychologica Belgica* 40: 154.

⁴ Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium", 154.

⁵ Jessie Dezutter, Bart Soenens, Koen Luyckx, Sabrina Bruyneel, Maarten Vansteenkiste, Bart Duriez, Dirk Hutsebaut. 2008. "The role of religion in death attitudes: Distinguishing between religious belief and style of processing religious contents". *Death Studies* 33 (1): 78.

⁶ Dirk Hutsebaut. 2000. "Post-Critical belief scales". *Journal of Empirical Theology* 13 (2): 22.

be fascinated by it on an intellectual level, yet, they do not show any personal involvement in religious practices and worship. In this sense, relativism is close to the concept of religious indifferentism.

Second naïveté is characterised by the recognition of transcendence and the concomitant belief that religious content can be interpreted in a symbolic and personally meaningful way. This attitude sees people believing in the existence of a transcendent reality and processing religious content in a more symbolic, open and tolerant fashion.⁷ The analysis of religious content takes into account the fact that it often depends on the historical context in which that content was created and thus may be partly ambiguous and in need of reinterpretation. We have here a rational approach towards religion, which transcend all possible reductive interpretations to find the symbolic meaning of religious content.

Based on the above model, the Post-critical Belief Scale (PCBS) was developed by Hutsebaut and his collaborators.⁸ It measures the four aforementioned attitudes towards religion: orthodoxy, external critique, relativism and second naïveté. These define the ways in which individuals analyse, evaluate and think about the content that constitutes the object of their religion (God, religious precepts, beliefs, dogma, etc.). They are concerned with the direction and extent of processing of religious information appearing in the individual's perceptual field. Numerous validation studies conducted on the scale have confirmed its theoretical assumptions and shown that it is a reliable and accurate method for measuring religious attitudes.⁹ Due to the theoretical assumptions and the items used, the scale primarily relates to the Christian religion. The PCBS model has been applied in a number of studies on the relationship of religiosity with mental health;¹⁰ cognitive and emotional factors of social cognition;¹¹ prejudice, racism and authoritarianism;¹² and social determinants of in-

⁷ Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium", 156.

⁸ Hutsebaut. 1996. "Post-Critical Belief: A new approach of the religious attitude problem" 54–56; Hutsebaut. 2000. "Post-Critical belief scales", 20–22; Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium", 156–157; Bart Duriez, Jessie Dezutter, Bart Neyrinck, Dirk Hutsebaut. 2007. "An introduction to the Post-Critical Belief Scale: Internal structure and external relationships". *Psyke and Logos* 28 (2): 769.

⁹ Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium", 178–179; Bart Duriez, Bart Soenens, Dirk Hutsebaut, 2005. "Introducing the shortened Post-Critical Belief Scale". *Personality and Individual Differences* 38(4): 855–856.

¹⁰ Jacek Śliwak, Beata Zarzycka. 2012. "The interplay between post-critical beliefs and anxiety: An exploratory study in a Polish sample". *Journal of Religion and Health* 51 (2): 429.

¹¹ Dirk Hutsebaut, Bart Duriez. 2001. "Approaches to religion and the moods and emotions associated with religion". *Journal of Empirical Theology* 14 (2): 82.

¹² Megan Johnson Shen, Logan A. Yelderman, Megan C. Haggard, Wade C. Rowatt. 2013. "Disentangling the belief in God and cognitive rigidity/flexibility components of religiosity to predict racial and value-violating prejudice: A Post-Critical Belief Scale analysis". *Personality and Individual Differences* 54 (3): 393.

dividual development.¹³ The results of this work indicate the academic popularity and value of the aforementioned attitudes to religion.

1.2. Relationships among attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being

Research has convincingly demonstrated associations between religiosity and well-being. The study conducted by Koenig on religion, spirituality and health showed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between religiosity and well-being in almost 80% of studies, including 8 out of 10 longitudinal studies.¹⁴ Examining the religious functioning of Muslims, Abdel-Khalek showed a positive relationship between religiosity and well-being among Muslim Kuwaiti youth.¹⁵ Analogous relationships were obtained in studies within Christianity by Van Cappellen and colleagues: there was a positive association between religion and well-being, which was also mediated by positive emotions.¹⁶ The underlying reason for this configuration may lie in the role played by religious beliefs and behaviour. Religion serves as a meaning-making system that enables people to understand the world, the self, other living beings and their interactions. It can therefore imbue one's life with a sense of coherence, values and meaning, which in turn can promote greater well-being.

Although empirical evidence clearly indicates positive relationships between religiosity and well-being, Cohen and Johnson point out that religious groups may differ in levels of well-being.¹⁷ Personal spirituality was found to be more strongly related to well-being for Christians than for Jews.¹⁸ In addition, Jews showed lower levels of well-being, happiness or life satisfaction compared with other religious groups.¹⁹ Comparing the religious motivations of Catholics and Protestants within self-determination theory, Sheldon demonstrated that, on average, Catholics scored

¹³ Bart Duriez, Bart Soenens. 2006. "Religiosity, moral attitudes and moral competence: A critical investigation of the religiosity-morality relation". *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 30 (1): 81.

¹⁴ Harold G. Koenig (2012). "Religion, spirituality, and health: The research and clinical implications". *International Scholarly Research Network. ISRN Psychiatry* 1: 3–4.

¹⁵ Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek 2007. "Religiosity, happiness, health, and psychopathology in a probability sample of Muslim adolescents". *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 10 (6): 581.

¹⁶ Patty Van Cappellen, Maria Toth-Gauthier, Vassilis Saroglou, Barbara L. Fredrickson. 2016. "Religion and well-being: The mediating role of positive emotions". *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17 (2): 501–502.

¹⁷ Adam B. Cohen, Kathryn A. Johnson. 2017. "The relation between religion and well-being". *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 12(3): 536.

¹⁸ Adam B. Cohen. 2002. "The importance of spirituality in well-being for Jews and Christians". *Journal of Happiness Studies* 3: 307.

¹⁹ Adam B. Cohen, Daniel E. Hall. 2009. "Existential beliefs, social satisfaction, and well-being among Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant older adults". *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 19: 51–52.

higher than some Protestants in a form of guilt called religious introspection, which in turn could reduce one's well-being.²⁰ The above dissimilarities may result from internal and structural differences embedded in various religions and denominations, such as specific beliefs in God and afterlife, religious coping, religiously oriented motivation and self-control, or the norms and values prescribed by each religion. Examining relationships between religious attitudes and psychological well-being among Anglicans is thus conceptually warranted.

1.3. Basic hope as a potential mediator in the relationship of attitudes towards religion with psychological well-being

A number of studies have shown that relationships between religion and well-being are rather indirect – that is, involving mediational mechanisms – than direct.²¹ One of the factors that can play a mediating role is basic hope, because it relates to both religion and well-being. Within Erikson's theory of personality development, basic hope is one of the most important constructs incorporated in one's world-view.²² It is defined as a fundamental belief in the world's order and meaning and its positive character. Observing regularities in surrounding significant events and meeting a child's psychological needs form the foundation for the development of basic hope. Basic hope also plays an important role in human development, from influencing self-esteem and social skills, to using effective coping strategies.

There is research demonstrating that religiosity is associated with hope. In a clinical sample of women with breast cancer, religiosity was positively related to hope; furthermore, hope mediated associations between religiosity and coping styles.²³ Intrinsic religiosity and religious practices were also found to positively relate to hope among cancer patients, which showed the importance of religion as a variable affecting hope.²⁴ Examining family caregivers of ill patients, Plakas and colleagues revealed that religiosity was an important factor that increased the level of hope

²⁰ Kennon M. Sheldon. 2006. "Catholic guilt? Comparing Catholics' and Protestants' religious motivations". *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 16: 221.

²¹ Jonathan E. Ramsay, Eddie M. W. Tong, Avijit Chowdhury, Moon-Ho R. Ho. 2019. "Teleological explanation and positive emotion serially mediate the effect of religion on well-being". *Journal of Personality* 87 (3): 686–687; Sharma, Singh. 2019. "Religion and well-being: The mediating role of positive virtues", 128–129.

²² Erik Erikson. 1963. *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton, 17–18; Erik Erikson. 1982. *The life cycle completed*. New York: Norton, 45–47.

²³ Ilanit Hasson-Ohayon, Michal Braun, Dalia Galinsky, Lea Baider. 2009. "Religiosity and hope: A path for women coping with a diagnosis of breast cancer". *Psychosomatics* 50 (5): 531.

²⁴ Baljani Esfandiyar, Khashabi Javad, Amanpour Elham, Azimi Neda. 2011. "Relationship between spiritual well-being, religion, and hope among patients with cancer". *Journal of Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery* 17 (3): 34–35.

and provided strength for the caregivers in confronting adverse situations.²⁵ Similar results were obtained by Krok, who found that religiosity (conceptualised in terms of the religious meaning system) was positively associated with both basic hope and hope for success among late adolescents.²⁶ Interpreting the connection between religion and hope, Snyder, Sigmon and Feldman highlighted that religion can provide a coherent set of valuable goals related to religious and moral values and clear pathways for achieving those goals in the form of rules and laws, as well as agency thinking through which people can proceed along pathways to complete goals.²⁷ As a consequence, religious beliefs and behaviour can imbue one's life with a prospective and hopeful vision, and thus increase a level of hope.

There is also a well-established relationship between hope and psychological well-being, which points to similar underlying psychological mechanisms between both constructs. In a group of parents with disabled children, hope had a strong positive correlation with psychological well-being.²⁸ Hope was also a positive predictor of psychological well-being among university students.²⁹ Although most of these studies were conducted within the hope theory proposed by Snyder, in which hope was conceptualised as a goal-directed cognitive process,³⁰ it is also reasonable to expect links between basic hope and psychological well-being, given that basic hope tends to increase cognitive and emotional abilities to productively overcome challenges and strengthen positive thinking. In this sense, it is expected that having a fundamental belief in the world's order and meaning and its positive character will contribute to the life of the individual and thus increase psychological well-being.

1.4. The present study

The present study examines the potential mediating role of basic hope in the relationship between attitudes towards religion (orthodoxy, external critique, relativism,

²⁵ Sotirios Plakas, Markella Boudioni, Georgia Fouka, Ann Taket. 2011. "The role of religiosity as a coping resource for relatives of critically ill patients in Greece". *Contemporary Nurse* 39 (1): 102–103.

²⁶ Dariusz Krok. 2016. "The importance of meaning in life as a mediator of religiousness and hope in late adolescents". In *Religiosity: Psychological perspectives, individual differences and health benefits*. Ed. Rochelle Cooper, 25. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

²⁷ Charles R. Snyder, David R., Sigmon, David B. Feldman. 2002. "Hope for the sacred and vice versa: Positive goal-directed thinking and religion". *Psychological Inquiry* 13 (3): 235.

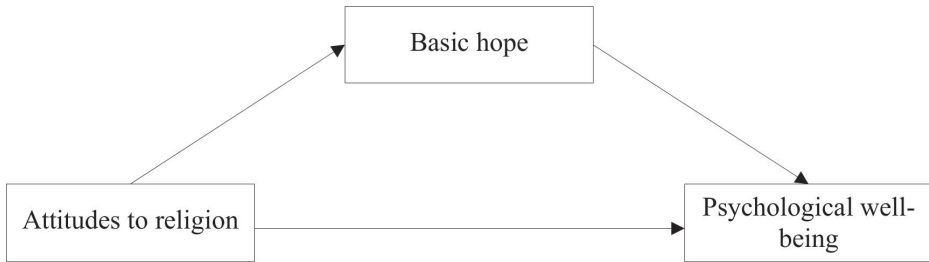
²⁸ Mubashir Gull, Naheed Nizami. 2015. "Comparative study of hope and psychological well-being among the parents of physically and intellectually disabled children". *International Journal of Modern Social Sciences* 4 (42): 150.

²⁹ Ferhat Kardas, Zekeriya Cam, Mustafa Eskisu, Sedat Gelibolu. 2019. "Gratitude, hope, optimism and life satisfaction as predictors of psychological well-being". *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 19 (82): 95–96.

³⁰ Charles R. Snyder. 2004. "Hope and depression: A light in the darkness". *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 23 (3): 347–349.

second naiveté) and psychological well-being among Anglicans (Figure 1). Based on Hutsebaut’s Model³¹ and past research, three hypotheses were proposed: (1) Specific attitudes towards religion will have different associations with basic hope; (2) basic hope will be positively related to psychological well-being; and (3) basic hope will mediate the relationship between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being.

Figure 1. The mediating function of basic hope in relationships between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being.



2. Method

2.1. Power analysis

To assess an adequate sample size *N*, a priori power analysis G*Power, as recommended by Faul and colleagues, was computed as a function of power level (1-β), pre-specified significance level α =.05 and test power (1-β) = .90.³² The necessary sample size of *N* = 165 was estimated as sufficient for our examination. The sample is considered to be representative of Anglicans in the United Kingdom in relation to the variables used in the current study.

2.2. Participants and procedure

A total of 176 participants (89 women and 87 men) participated in this study. They were all members of the Church of England. The data were collected in the southern parts of the United Kingdom, aiming to cover a wide range of religious and social characteristics for a representative sample of Anglicans. Participant

³¹ Dirk Hutsebaut. 1996. “Post-Critical Belief: A new approach of the religious attitude problem”. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 9: 55–56.

³² Franz Faul, Edgar Erdfelder, Axel Buchner, Albert-Georg Lang. 2009. “Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses”. *Behavior Research Methods* 41: 1157–1158.

age ranged from 20 to 76 years, with a mean age of 32.06 years ($SD = 12.30$). Women ($M = 34.13$, $SD = 11.09$) were slightly older than men ($M = 29.98$, $SD = 12.41$; $t = 2.26$, $p < .05$). All the participants were invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis and completed a questionnaire packet consisting of three questionnaires. The study was anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from the participants. After the study, they were debriefed and adequate information was provided.

2.3. Measures

The following three questionnaires were used to assess attitudes towards religion, psychological well-being and basic hope.

Attitudes towards religion. The PCBS was used to measure four different attitudes towards religion: orthodoxy, external critique, relativism and second naiveté.³³ The scale consists of 33 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from -3 (strongly disagree) to $+3$ (strongly agree). Examples of items are “I think that Bible stories should be taken literally, as they are written” (orthodoxy), “Faith is an expression of a weak personality” (external critique), “I am well aware my ideology is only one possibility among so many others” (relativism) and “The Bible holds a deeper truth which can only be revealed by personal reflection” (second naiveté). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the present study were .86 for orthodoxy, .84 for external critique, .79 for relativism and .82 for second naiveté.

Psychological well-being. The Psychological Well-Being (PWB) scale evaluates a level of eudaimonic well-being conceptualised in terms of one’s development, values and self-realisation.³⁴ The scale contains six subscales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Examples of items include: “My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing”, “I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily” or “I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world”. The short 18-item version was used, with only the overall score due to low factor analysis indicators for the particular subscales. The items are scored on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the present study was .85.

³³ Hutsebaut. 1996. “Post-Critical Belief: A new approach of the religious attitude problem”, 63; Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. “A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium”, 154.

³⁴ Carol D. Ryff, Corey Lee M. Keyes. 1995. “The structure of psychological well-being revisited”. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69 (4): 720.

Basic hope. The Basic Hope Inventory (BHI-12) was used to assess the level of basic hope held by participants.³⁵ The inventory measures basic hope according to Erik Erikson's theory, which is understood as a fundamental belief that the world has: (1) order and meaning and (b) a positive character.³⁶ The BHI-12 includes 12 items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). Examples of items include: "There are no objectively wrong and good things in the world", "The world is good even if we are not doing well". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the present study was .78.

3. Results

3.1. Correlational analysis

Our initial examination of the anticipated relationships began by computing correlations among age, attitudes towards religion, psychological well-being and hope. The results are presented in Table 1.

The Pearson correlation coefficients showed that age was positively correlated with orthodoxy and second naiveté. Regarding attitudes towards religion, orthodoxy was negatively associated with external critique and positively associated with second naiveté, psychological well-being and basic hope. External critique was positively correlated with relativism and negatively correlated with second naiveté and basic hope. Relativism was only negatively correlated with basic hope. Second naiveté was positively associated with psychological well-being and basic hope. In addition, psychological well-being was positively correlated with basic hope.

3.2. Mediation analysis

The next step of the statistical investigations consisted in conducting a series of mediation analyses in which attitudes towards religion (orthodoxy, external critique, relativism, second naiveté) were independent variables; psychological well-being was an dependent variable; and basic hope was a mediator. The mediation parameters were set in accordance with suggestions proposed by Hayes (2018) – model 4 was applied and the bootstrapping procedure to investigate the direct and indirect effects was based on 5000 samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. The main purpose was to assess whether basic hope would mediate the

³⁵ Jerzy Trzebiński, Mariusz Zięba. 2004. "Basic hope as a world-view: an outline of a concept". *Polish Psychological Bulletin* 35 (3): 175–176.

³⁶ Erikson. 1963. *Childhood and society*, 10–12; Erikson. 1982. *The life cycle completed*, 15–17.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations among age, attitudes towards religion, psychological well-being and hope.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Age	32.069	12.03	–					
2. Orthodoxy	3.71	1.23	.25***	–				
3. External Critique	3.52	1.21	-.12	-.24**	–			
4. Relativism	4.38	.92	-.07	-.05	.56***	–		
5. Second Naiveté	4.69	.98	.26***	.56***	-.40***	.10	–	
6. Psychological well-being	4.46	.63	.12	.17*	-.08	.01	.15*	–
7. Basic hope	3.39	.48	.12	.23**	-.51***	-.28***	.37***	.21**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2. Direct effects for basic hope in mediating the relationship between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being (standardised coefficients and effects).

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i> [<i>LLCI</i> , <i>ULCI</i>]	Model <i>R</i> ²
Direct effects				
Orthodoxy – Basic hope	.23	.03	3.09 [.03, .15]	.05**
Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.18	.07	2.40 [.03, .31]	
Orthodoxy – Psychological well-being	.13	.03	1.67 [-.01, .10]	.06***
External critique – Basic hope	-.50	.02	-7.72 [-.25, -.15]	.26***
Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.23	.08	2.64 [.05, .37]	
External critique – Psychological well-being	.03	.03	.38 [-.05, .07]	.05*
Relativism – Basic hope	-.14	.04	-3.79 [-.22, -.07]	.08***
Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.22	.07	2.95 [.07, .35]	
Relativism – Psychological well-being	.06	.04	.81 [-.04, .10]	.05*
Second naiveté – Basic hope	.36	.04	5.19 [.11, .25]	.13***
Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.18	.07	2.26 [.02, .31]	
Second naiveté – Psychological well-being	.08	.04	1.05 [-.03, .11]	.05*

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$

Table 3. Indirect effects and R^2 mediation effect size for basic hope in mediating the relationship between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being (standardised coefficients and effects).

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i> [<i>LLCI</i> , <i>ULCI</i>]	Model <i>R</i> ²
Indirect effect	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Orthodoxy – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.04	.02	.01	.09
External critique – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	-.12	.02	-.21	-.03
Relativism – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	-.06	.03	-.14	-.01
Second naiveté – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.06	.03	.01	.14
R^2 mediation effect size				
Orthodoxy – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.01	.01	.01	.05
External critique – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.01	.01	.02	.04
Relativism – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	-.01	.03	-.02	.01
Second naiveté – Basic hope – Psychological well-being	.01	.01	-.001	.05

relationship between attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being. The results are given in Tables 2 and 3.

The results for the direct effects (Table 2) demonstrated that basic hope was positively connected to psychological well-being for all attitudes towards religion. Orthodoxy was positively associated with basic hope; however, the direct effect between orthodoxy and psychological well-being was statistically non-significant. External critique was negatively connected to basic hope, but the direct effect between external critique and psychological well-being was statistically non-significant. Relativism was negatively associated with basic hope, while the direct effect between relativism and psychological well-being was statistically non-significant. Finally, second naiveté was positively linked to basic hope, but the direct effect between second naiveté and psychological well-being was statistically non-significant.

Finally, indirect effects were calculated to show mediational relations among the variables (Table 3).

Basic hope turned out to mediate the relationships between all attitudes towards religion and psychological well-being; however, the signs of their directions dif-

ferred. Orthodoxy and second naiveté, respectively, were related to higher basic hope, which in turn was related to a higher level of psychological well-being. In contrast, external critique and relativism were related to lower basic hope, which in turn was related to a lower level of psychological well-being. Additionally, the R^2 mediation effect size was significant for orthodoxy, external critique and second naiveté, but not for relativism.

4. Discussion

The present paper sought to examine whether basic hope could mediate the relationship of four main attitudes towards religion – orthodoxy, external critique, relativism and second naiveté – with psychological well-being among members of the Anglican community. Guided by the concept of attitudes towards religion proposed by Wulff,³⁷ the results have enabled us to formulate significant conclusions that broaden the understanding of cross-cultural and religious factors contributing to psychological well-being.

4.1. Associations between attitudes towards religion and basic hope

Attitudes towards religion are a significant factor contributing to experiencing basic hope. Consistent with previous research,³⁸ this study found that all four attitudes were associated with basic hope among Anglicans. However, the character of these associations differed for specific attitudes: orthodoxy and second naiveté were positively related to basic hope, while external critique and relativism were negatively related. This is an interesting finding which indicates that accepting the presence of transcendence combined with both literal thinking about religious issues and recognising symbolic and personally meaningful interpretations of religious content is linked with possessing a fundamental belief in the world's order and meaning and its positive character. At the same time, an approach to religion involving literal as well as metaphorical, symbolic thinking about religious themes, but with a rejection of the existence of transcendence corresponds to lower levels of positive fundamental beliefs in the world's order and meaning. This confirms the first hypothesis assuming that specific attitudes towards religion will have different associations with basic hope.

Interpreting these findings, one can come to a conclusion that the decisive factor for holding fundamental beliefs in two features of the world (i.e. its order and

³⁷ Wulff. 1991. *Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary views*, 650–653.

³⁸ Hasson-Ohayon, Braun, Galinsky, Baider. 2009. "Religiosity and hope: A path for women coping with a diagnosis of breast cancer", 531; Esfandiyar, Javad, Elham, Neda. 2011. "Relationship between spiritual well-being, religion, and hope among patients with cancer", 34–35.

meaning and its positive character) is the fact of accepting vs. rejecting the existence of a transcendent reality. Anglicans who consciously and deliberately accept the existence of a transcendent reality (God, the Absolute Being) are able to better and more effectively develop the belief that the surrounding world is characterised by an inner order and meaning, as well as being inherently positive for human beings. This conviction is in line with past research which portrayed religion as a system of beliefs and behaviour that provides meaning, goals, pathways for accomplishing those goals and agency thoughts for applying those pathways.³⁹ These beliefs predispose individuals to perceive regularities in important life events, along with positive attitudes towards the surrounding environment, which consequently form the basis for the development of basic hope. An additional argument supporting this line of thinking is the observation that most of the great religions see the world as ordered and organised according to an inherent plan.⁴⁰ Therefore, religious beliefs help Anglicans acquire positive convictions about the world's order and positive character.

4.2. Relationships between basic hope and psychological well-being

The results of correlation analysis and direct effects demonstrated that basic hope was positively associated with psychological well-being. Thus, Anglicans who hold fundamental beliefs in the world's order, meaning and positive character have a higher level of well-being and happiness expressed in terms of one's development, values and self-realisation. This finding supports the second hypothesis, which assumed such relationships. It is also compatible with earlier studies in which hope was positively related to well-being.⁴¹ Yet, previous research highlighting associations between hope and well-being has primarily included Snyder's theory of hope conceptualised in terms of goals, pathways and agency thoughts.

Our findings thus extend previous research by demonstrating that basic hope is also positively associated with psychological well-being among Anglicans. Individuals who hold strong beliefs in the orderliness of the world, its meaningfulness and positive nature will therefore be characterised by higher levels of satisfaction and contentment in the areas of inner development, value realisation and self-fulfilment. This view seems justified when we consider Erikson's conviction that the role of ba-

³⁹ Snyder, Sigmon, Feldman. 2002. "Hope for the sacred and vice versa: Positive goal-directed thinking and religion", 235.

⁴⁰ Seyyed H. Nasr 1996. *Religion and the order of nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 30–31.

⁴¹ Gull, Nizami. 2015. "Comparative study of hope and psychological well-being among the parents of physically and intellectually disabled children", 150; Victor Counted, Kenneth I. Pargament, Andrea Ortega Bechara, Shaun Joynt, Richard G. Cowden. 2022. "Hope and well-being in vulnerable contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic: Does religious coping matter?" *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 17 (1): 78–79.

sic hope is to stimulate and support the individual's constructive way of building worldviews and coping with challenges and new opportunities in the individual's life.⁴² The more resilient people are in the face of adversity and the more they can deal with challenges, the more they are able to shape their lives, develop their potential and achieve contentment and happiness. A well-established vision of the world as organised and meaningful will therefore translate into higher levels of well-being within the eudaimonic dimension.

4.3. The mediating function of basic hope in the relationship of attitudes towards religion with psychological well-being

The main finding of our study demonstrated that basic hope turned out to mediate the relationships between the four attitudes towards religion (i.e. orthodoxy, external critique, relativism and second naiveté) and psychological well-being among Anglicans, which confirms our third hypothesis. In line with Rose and his collaborators,⁴³ this reveals a very interesting mechanism suggesting that fundamental beliefs in an orderly, meaningful and positively oriented world underlie associations between religiosity and well-being. The factor of hope is therefore an important "psychological bridge" between religious behaviour and the eudaimonic satisfaction with one's development and fulfilment of life goals.

However, this mediation also raises the question of why the signs of mediational directions were different – that is, why orthodoxy and second naiveté were related to higher basic hope, which in turn was related to a higher level of psychological well-being, whereas external critique and relativism were related to lower basic hope, which in turn was related to a lower level of psychological well-being. To understand this difference, it is crucial to draw the reader's attention to the fact that attitudes towards religion can take many forms.⁴⁴ Although orthodoxy expresses literal thinking about religion, while second naiveté represents a symbolic interpretation of religious content, both attitudes to religion accept the presence of a transcendent realm and belief in the existence of the sacred. Anglicans who embody such attitudes are more predisposed to have stronger beliefs in an orderly, meaningful and positively oriented world, which consequently leads to higher eudaimonic happiness expressed in terms of self-fulfilment and personal growth. In other words, greater

⁴² Erikson. 1963. *Childhood and society*, 17–18.

⁴³ Andrew H. Rose, Jennifer R. Rose, Rick B. Miller, W. Justin Dyer. 2018. "Exploring hope as a mediator between religiosity and depression in adolescents". *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 37 (3): 250.

⁴⁴ Hutsebaut. 2000. "Post-Critical belief scales" 19–20; Duriez, Fontaine, Hutsebaut. 2000. "A further elaboration of the post-critical belief scale: Evidence for the existence of four different approaches to religion in Flanders-Belgium", 154.

acceptance of a transcendent reality is associated with higher psychological well-being on the basis of personal positive convictions about the world.

By contrast, the attitudes of external critique and relativism, although also representing literal (external critique) and symbolic (relativism) thinking about religious topics, exclude the existence of a supernatural reality. Thus, Anglicans who reject the sacred dimension tend to show weaker beliefs in an orderly, purposeful and positive world, which are subsequently related to lower eudaimonic happiness. These results therefore undeniably lead to the conclusion that the mediating direction of hope is determined by the acceptance vs. rejection of a transcendent reality. This suggests that religious beliefs regarding the existence of the sacred are central to psychological well-being through identifying and perceiving the world as organised, meaningful and positive, and may represent important ways in which a person can enhance their eudaimonic happiness from religiously oriented behaviour.⁴⁵ Naturally, this conclusion does not imply that the core belief in a transcendent reality determines all relationships of religion with psychological factors, but only the relationship with basic hope and psychological well-being. Further research is needed to clarify other relationships.

It is also important to consider the limitations of the current study, particularly in light of the specific measures used and the sample included. To measure attitudes towards religion, the PCBS was applied. Although it is a reliable and widely used tool, there are also other questionnaires measuring people's attitudes towards religion that could yield slightly different results.⁴⁶ Next, our sample only included Anglicans, which offered a unique opportunity to explore the mediating role of basic hope in relationships between religion and psychological well-being. However, they are only one of the many denominations present within Christianity, so further research using samples from other Christian denominations is needed to better understand the aforementioned relationships. Finally, the current study did not assess respondents' socioeconomic factors (e.g. income, place of living, education, employment) which, to some degree, could affect their responses, especially in psychological well-being. When planning the present research, we did not consider these factors to be of great importance, but they should be taken into account in future studies.

In conclusion, the concept under discussion should be emphasised for its high exploratory value in the field of religion and its validity to changing cultural and social factors. When thinking about religious issues and analysing their content, individuals use religious cognitive styles depending on their religious beliefs and con-

⁴⁵ Suzanne Hoogeveen, Alexandra Sarafoglou, Balazs Aczel, Yonathan Aditya, Alexandra J. Alayan, Peter J. Allen, Sacha Altay et al. 2022. "A many-analysts approach to the relation between religiosity and well-being". *Religion, Brain and Behavior* 1: 22; Krok. 2016. "The importance of meaning in life as a mediator of religiousness and hope in late adolescents", 25;

⁴⁶ Khaista Rahman, Muhammad Tahir Khalily, Muhammad Akram. 2021. "The adaptation and validation of the New Indices of Religious Orientation Revised Scale". *Foundation University Journal of Psychology* 5 (1): 132–133.

victions, so that the reception of religious information is dependent on the religiosity of specific individuals. Distinguishing specific styles makes it possible to explore the relationship between religiosity at the cognitive level and a number of psychological factors. Moreover, the styles presented represent a pertinent and appropriate approach to analyse religiosity in the current times, marked by a postmodern mentality, where the state of religious thinking and practice is constantly changing due to the processes of secularisation.

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