

Article

Religiosity and Contentment among Teachers in the Philippines during COVID-19 Pandemic: Mediating Effects of Resilience, Optimism, and Well-Being

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on many areas of people's lives all over the world, including in the area of education. Many educational institutions must un-preparedly transition from physical classes to distance learning modalities, affecting both the students and teachers. Given that the teachers are confronted with so many challenges, leading to their increased stress and mental health issues, this research project investigated the role of religiosity in the contentment of a sample of 296 teachers in the Philippines, mediated by the effects of resilience, optimism, and well-being. Bivariate correlation analysis showed that religiosity, resilience, optimism, and well-being were positively and significantly correlated with each other, while contentment was positively and significantly correlated with optimism and well-being. Regression analysis indicated no direct significant association between religiosity and contentment. Mediation analyses suggested that optimism partially mediated the impact of religiosity on well-being, whereas well-being fully mediated the impact of religiosity on contentment and the impact of optimism on contentment. Lastly, the measurement model indicated a significant path from religiosity to contentment through optimism and well-being. These significant results suggest that, while facing adversities in life, the teachers in the Philippines might use religiosity and its relevant dimensions as positive coping mechanisms to face the academic challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus derive contentment that is mediated by the positive effects of optimism and well-being.

Keywords: religiosity; contentment; resilience; optimism; well-being; education; teachers; SEM; COVID-19

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented events for many societies. The crucible effect of the pandemic has similarly affected the area of education all over the world. In the Philippines, the enhanced community quarantine of the National Capital Region and the entire island of Luzon started in 15 March 2020. This was followed by national community quarantines to mitigate the spread of the deadly disease. The Department of Education as well as the Commission of Higher Education ordered both private and public educational institutions to immediately transition from face-to-face modality to distance learning modalities (De Vera 2020; Department of Education Philippines 2020). Neither teachers nor students were prepared for the challenges that these abrupt changes

in teaching and learning imposed on them. Teachers are being confronted with numerous of trials that lead to stress and mental health issues (Klapproth et al. 2020).

A recent article by Robosa et al. (2021) described the experiences and challenges faced by educators as they navigate the uncharted waters brought about by the pandemic. According to their study, teachers are primarily challenged by the lack of resources for online teaching. This includes a reliable internet connection and online platform to manage their teaching resources. Another issue that they face is the inadequate skills to handle students online. Many teachers and schools were caught off guard as schools swiftly shutdown and shifted to online teaching. The pandemic forced the educational systems to cope, however, quality of education has been compromised due to the incapacities for effective online teaching (Benons 2020). Even the way how teachers prepare their lessons and materials became more demanding. Additional workload due to longer preparation for online teaching has contributed to the stress and burnout of teachers (Robosa et al. 2021). According to the survey by Schaffhauser (2020), “majority of the teachers reported that they are somewhat or extremely uncertain, stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, sad and lonely” as they shift to online teaching. In spite of these challenges, teachers continue to cope and be positive in their outlook in teaching and learning.

Currently, COVID-19 vaccines are available (World Health Organization 2020). However, the slow vaccination rollout in many countries (Sah et al. 2021) and the circulation of multiple SARS-CoV-2 variants (Wise 2020) continue to put the health of the global population in a precarious situation. While some countries have performed relatively well in coping with the pandemic (Nazrul Islam et al. 2020), many—especially those from the Global South—are still reeling from the impact of COVID-19 containment strategies (Chowdhury and Jomo 2020).

In facing adversities in life, many people use religion or religiosity as a positive coping strategy to hurdle challenges. Religiosity has various dimensions, encompassing different aspects of the person’s behavior, beliefs and practices (Fukuyama 1961; Glock and Stark 1965; Huber and Huber 2012). Studies showed that religiosity affects the person’s overall well-being. One study indicated that religiosity increased prosocial behavior (Batara et al. 2016). It has been found that religion was salient in helping members of the communities (Saroglou 2013).

Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people returned to religion as a way to cope and experience contentment and normalcy. The sense of religiosity gives them the strength, protection, resiliency, perseverance, and hope through stressful situations (Dolcos et al. 2021). The quality of life, including the physical and mental well-being, of teachers have been threatened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Rabacal et al. 2020).

Teacher well-being and contentment are of primary importance in teaching effectiveness. Thus, given the current challenging circumstances, this study explored the relationship between religiosity and contentment among teachers in the Philippines during COVID-19, as well as the mediating roles of resilience, optimism, and well-being. More specifically and as indicated in Figure 1, it was hypothesized that:

- Religiosity would be significantly and positively correlated with resilience, optimism, well-being, and contentment among teachers in the Philippines (H1 to H4).
- Resilience and optimism would be significantly and positively correlated with well-being and contentment (H5 to H8).
- Well-being would be significantly and positively correlated with contentment (H9).
- There would be significant mediating effects of resilience (H10a and H10b), optimism (H11a and H11b), and well-being (H12a, H12b, and H12c) on the relationship between religiosity and contentment.
- Structural equation modeling analysis would indicate significant paths: religiosity \Rightarrow resilience \Rightarrow well-being \Rightarrow contentment (H13) and religiosity \Rightarrow optimism \Rightarrow well-being \Rightarrow contentment (H14).

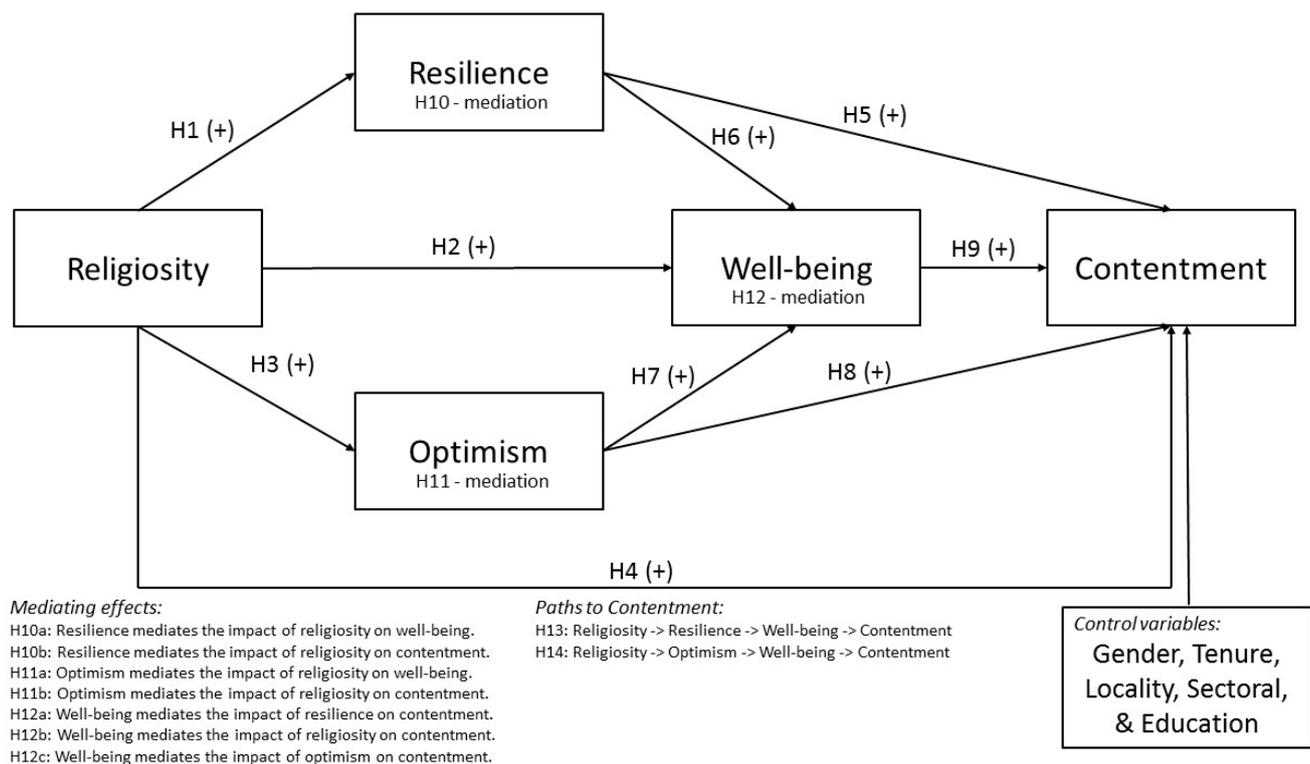


Figure 1. Structural framework.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedures

Participants of the current study were volunteer teachers from the Philippines. Sample recruitment was assisted by several national non-government teacher organizations. An invitation to participate in the study was distributed through social media and e-mails. Participants completed the survey questionnaire through a google form link. Before the start of the survey, the purpose and the voluntary nature of the data collection were clearly communicated. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw any time, and that by completing the survey, they were acknowledging their consent to participate in the study. Anonymity of the participants was observed in all stages of the data collection. The protocol of the study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Background Demographics

Background demographics of the teachers included age, gender, tenure (length of service or years working), educational attainment, school type (sectoral/Catholic/Christian schools or public schools), school locality or location (urban or rural), and religious affiliation. Gender was included because of the predominantly feminized teaching career situation in the Philippines (Bongco and Ancho 2020). The length of service and educational attainment are directly related to promotion and salary increases (Ferrer 2017; Ulla 2018). Lastly, school location (urban or rural) and type (or ownership, Catholic/Christian or public schools) are also key components affecting the teachers' salary. For instance, recent salary increases in the government sector have made working in public schools more attractive as compared to private ones. Similarly, there is also a salary gap between teachers working in the urban and the rural areas.

2.2.2. Religiosity

Religiosity is considered as the personal preferences, emotions, beliefs, and actions that refer to an existing religion (Stolz 2009) (p. 347). To capture its essence, religiosity is often measured using several dimensions (Holdcroft 2006). Huber and Huber (2012) proposed the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), which measured religiosity in terms of intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experience. The different versions of the CRS were validated for use within the Philippine context (del Castillo et al. 2020; del Castillo et al. 2021). For the current study, the interreligious 20 items CRS (CRSi-20) was used to collect the teachers' level of religiosity. Items were collected using five, six, and eight points Likert (1932) style self-reported frequency ratings from never to very often, more than once a week, and several times a day. These were later recoded into five levels for consistency. For more information on CRS items, recoding, and evaluation, please refer to Huber and Huber (2012) (p. 720). Cronbach (1951) Alpha reliability of the CRSi-20 was computed at 0.84, signifying good internal consistency.

2.2.3. Resilience

To understand the teachers' tendency to recover from stress and bounce back, the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) was used (Smith et al. 2008). A highly used scale, BRS is a six items (including three reversely coded items) instrument with five points Likert (1932) style self-reported agreement on personal resilience related constructs with ratings from 1 (highly disagree) to 5 (highly agree). Sample items are "I have a hard time making it through stressful events" (reverse coded) and "I usually come through difficult times with little trouble." Average of the six BRS items is interpreted as follows: 1.00 to 2.99 = low resilience, 3.00 to 4.30 = normal resilience, and 4.32 to 5.00 = high resilience (Smith et al. 2008). Cronbach (1951) Alpha reliability of the BRS was computed at 0.80, signifying good internal consistency.

2.2.4. Optimism

To measure teachers' optimism, the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) was used (Scheier et al. 1994). Of the 10 items within the LOT-R, only 3 items were used in the computation of the teachers' optimism. These items were "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best", "I'm always optimistic about my future", and "Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad." Responses were collected using five points Likert (1932) style self-reported perceived agreement with ratings from 1 (disagree a lot) to 5 (agree a lot). Interpretation of the optimism variable was computed by taking the sum of the 3 optimism items, with the higher score signifying more optimism. Cronbach (1951) Alpha reliability of the optimism variable was computed at 0.70, denoting acceptable internal consistency.

2.2.5. Well-Being

The eight items Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire (TSWQ) was used to assess the teachers' work-related well-being (Renshaw et al. 2015). The TSWQ is composed of two dimensions: teaching efficacy and school connectedness. Sample items included "I can really be myself at this school" and "I am treated with respect at this school." Responses were collected using five points Likert (1932) style self-reported perceived agreement with ratings from 1 (least agree) to 5 (most agree). Computation of the TSWQ was accomplished by averaging the mean score of the items. Cronbach (1951) Alpha reliability of the TSWQ was computed at 0.90, signifying high internal consistency.

2.2.6. Contentment

Contentment is a self-made two items variable depicting teachers' satisfaction with their salary and career. Items included "I am satisfied with my career" and "Compared to other professions, my salary is high." These two items were deliberately selected to represent the importance of career satisfaction and financial remuneration as part of teachers'

contentment (Babu 2020; Currall et al. 2005). Responses were collected using five points Likert (1932) style self-reported perceived agreement with ratings from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Internal consistency was assessed using inter-item correlation (Clark and Watson 1995). Results showed that inter-item correlation was computed at 0.27; values between 0.20 and 0.40 is considered acceptable (Piedmont 2014).

2.3. Statistical Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 (IBM, Armonk, NY, USA) on loan from one of the researcher's universities. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency were analyzed to describe the data distribution. Pearson's correlation was used to calculate the correlations between the variables. Regression analysis was accomplished for initial evaluation of the mediating effects of the selected variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also used to validate the measurement model regarding the reliability, internal consistency, and validity of the observed variables (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Ho 2006). Structural mediation analysis was accomplished with the use of AMOS version 26.0 (Baron and Kenny 1986). Bootstrap method (sampling repeated 2000 times) was used to estimate the 95% confidence intervals (CI; should not include zero) for significance testing of mediating effects (to determine direct and indirect effects; no mediation, partial mediation, or full mediation) (Mallinckrodt et al. 2006; Shrout and Bolger 2002). Goodness of fit of the model were evaluated using several criteria (Byrne 2010; Cho et al. 2020; Hu and Bentler 1999; Marsh and Hocevar 1985): Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR; values <0.08 indicating good fit), Chi-square/degrees freedom (CMIN/df; ratio between 2 and 5 indicating reasonable fit), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI; values >0.90 indicating good fit), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; values >0.90 indicating good fit), and the Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; values <0.08 indicating good fit).

3. Results

3.1. Common Method Bias Analysis

For the current study, common method bias testing was accomplished using factor analysis (Xu et al. 2021). Chi-square statistics for the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.870 at $p < 0.001$. Principal component analysis also revealed that the eigenvalues of the five factors were greater than 1, while the first factor explained 29.25% of the variance, which is well below the cutoff value of 40% (Podsakoff et al. 2003), denoting the absence of serious common method biases within the analysis.

3.2. Demographic Profile of the Participants

A total of 296 teachers completed the survey. As indicated in Table 1, among the participants, around 42% consisted of the youngest age group of 21 to 30 years old, 26% were of the 31 to 40 years old age group, while the remaining were of 41 years old and above age group. Average age of participants was around 36 years old, denoting a young group of teachers. As expected, female teachers comprised around 70% of the participants. Almost all of the participants were Christians, with 86% claiming to be Catholic. In addition, almost 62% of the teachers were new entrants with less than 10 years of teaching experience. Furthermore, almost 40% of the teachers were graduate degree holders, while 67% were working within the private sector. The schools are mostly sectoral, which are either Catholic or Christian institutions. Around 67% of the schools are located within the urban or city district.

Table 1. Participants' background demographics.

| Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Age | | |
| 21 to 30 | 123 | 41.6 |
| 31 to 40 | 76 | 25.7 |
| 41 to 50 | 61 | 20.6 |
| 51 to 60 | 36 | 12.2 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 206 | 69.6 |
| Male | 90 | 30.4 |
| Tenure/Work experience (years) | | |
| 1 to 10 | 183 | 61.8 |
| 11 to 20 | 65 | 22.0 |
| 21 to 30 | 39 | 13.2 |
| 31 to 40 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Highest educational attainment | | |
| College/Undergraduate | 177 | 59.8 |
| Master | 75 | 25.3 |
| Doctoral/PhD | 44 | 14.9 |
| School type | | |
| Sectoral (Catholic/Christian) schools | 199 | 67.2 |
| Public schools | 97 | 32.8 |
| School location | | |
| Urban | 197 | 66.6 |
| Rural | 99 | 33.4 |
| Religious affiliation | | |
| Catholic | 254 | 85.8 |
| Christian | 35 | 11.8 |
| others | 7 | 2.4 |

Note: $N = 296$.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix for the various background demographics, religiosity, resilience, optimism, well-being, and contentment are presented in Table 2. As expected, bivariate correlation analysis showed that religiosity, resilience, optimism, and well-being were positively and significantly correlated with each other (H1 to H3). There was also a significant correlation between resilience and well-being (H6), between optimism and well-being (H7), between optimism and contentment (H8), and between well-being and contentment (H9). Surprisingly, there was no significant correlation between religiosity and contentment (H4), and between resilience and contentment (H5). Interestingly, contentment was negatively and significantly correlated with locality (school location) and sectoral (school type), denoting that teachers working in public schools and rural areas have lower contentment as compared to teachers working in sectoral schools and urban areas.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, correlations and average variance of the study variables.

| Variables | Mean | SD | Age | Gender | Tenure | Locality | Sectoral | Education | Religiosity | Resilience | Optimism | Well-Being | Contentment |
|---|-------|-------|---------|--------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Age | 35.50 | 10.66 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | 0.30 | 0.46 | −0.06 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tenure | 10.41 | 9.04 | 0.84 ** | −0.09 | | | | | | | | | |
| Locality | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0.00 | 0.08 | −0.02 | | | | | | | | |
| Sectoral | 0.67 | 0.47 | −0.12 * | −0.09 | −0.11 | 0.15 * | | | | | | | |
| Education | 0.40 | 0.49 | 0.28 ** | 0.07 | 0.26 ** | −0.05 | −0.59 ** | | | | | | |
| Religiosity | 4.52 | 0.37 | 0.10 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.03 | −0.04 | 0.07 | | | | | |
| Resilience | 3.20 | 0.43 | 0.17 ** | 0.03 | 0.15 ** | −0.01 | −0.01 | 0.02 | 0.12 * | | | | |
| Optimism | 13.30 | 1.50 | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.05 | −0.02 | −0.04 | 0.04 | 0.42 ** | 0.15 ** | | | |
| Well-being | 4.38 | 0.53 | 0.19 ** | 0.06 | 0.18 ** | −0.03 | −0.11 | 0.09 | 0.41 ** | 0.12 * | 0.57 ** | | |
| Contentment | 3.38 | 0.85 | 0.20 ** | 0.01 | 0.21 ** | −0.12 * | −0.25 ** | 0.30 ** | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.21 ** | 0.43 ** | |
| Square Root of Average Variance Extracted | | | | | | | | | 0.63 | 0.66 | 0.71 | 0.82 | 0.60 |

Notes: $N = 296$. SD = standard deviation. Gender was coded as binary variable (0 = female and 1 = male). Tenure is work experience in years. Locality or school location was coded as binary variable (0 = rural and 1 = urban). Sectoral or school type was coded as binary variable (0 = public and 1 = Catholic/Christian private schools). Education was also coded as binary variable (0 = college of undergraduate and 1 = graduate degree or higher). * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

3.4. Regression Analysis

Table 3 shows the regression coefficients of the mediating variables between religiosity and contentment. Results showed that there was no significant direct association between religiosity and contentment, while religiosity significantly predicted resilience, well-being, and optimism in their respective regression analysis. When religiosity and the mediating variables were entered simultaneously in the regression equation, only well-being significantly predicted contentment.

Table 3. Regression coefficients of the mediating variables.

| Outcome Variables | Predictors | Goodness-of-Fit Indices | | | | Regression Coefficients | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | R | R ² | F | p | B | Beta | t | p |
| Contentment | Religiosity | 0.09 | 0.01 | 2.40 | 0.122 | 0.21 | 0.09 | 1.55 | 0.122 |
| | Resilience | 0.12 | 0.02 | 4.47 | 0.035 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 2.12 | 0.035 |
| Well-being | Religiosity | 0.41 | 0.17 | 59.66 | 0.000 | 0.60 | 0.41 | 7.72 | 0.000 |
| Optimism | Religiosity | 0.42 | 0.18 | 62.99 | 0.000 | 1.71 | 0.42 | 7.94 | 0.000 |
| Contentment | Religiosity | 0.44 | 0.19 | 17.30 | 0.000 | −0.23 | −0.10 | −1.66 | 0.099 |
| | Resilience | | | | | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.45 | 0.650 |
| | Well-being | | | | | 0.76 | 0.48 | 7.30 | 0.000 |
| | Optimism | | | | | −0.02 | −0.03 | −0.39 | 0.694 |

3.5. Measurement Model

Prior to the mediation analysis, it is also customary to conduct a CFA to validate the measurement model with regards to the reliability, internal consistency, and validity of the observed variables (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Ho 2006). Model fit was computed at SRMR = 0.068, CMIN/df = 1.95, GFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.94, and RMSEA = 0.06, all within the acceptable limits (Byrne 2010; Cho et al. 2020; Hu and Bentler 1999; Marsh and Hocevar 1985). Table 4 shows that all of the loadings were significant with most of the values greater than 0.70. Composite reliability (CR) values were computed with most values higher than 0.70, while average variance extracted (AVE) with values almost equal to and higher than 0.40, denoting mediocre values (Hair et al. 2005). However, it is often too strict to consider the reliability solely based on AVE (Malhotra and Dash 2011). Hence, discriminant validity was also assessed (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed comparing the square root of each of the AVE with the correlation coefficients for each of the variables. Results showed that the square root of AVE (see Table 2) was higher than the correlations, hence, signifying that the measurement model supported the discriminant validity between the variables.

3.6. Mediation Analysis

While controlling for some background demographics (such as: gender, tenure, locality or school location, sectoral, and educational attainment), mediation analysis was conducted to estimate direct, indirect, and total effects between religiosity and contentment as mediated by resilience, well-being, and optimism. Table 5 and Figure 2 show the mediation analysis results. In addition to the direct effects that were significant in H1 to H3, H7, and H9, results also showed some significant indirect effects: H11a (Religiosity ⇒ Optimism ⇒ Well-being) with 95% CI: 0.426, 0.868; H12b (Religiosity ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment) with 95% CI: 0.080, 0.684, and H12c (Optimism ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment) with 95% CI: 0.388, 1.253. Taken together, results showed that optimism partially mediated the impact of religiosity on well-being (H11a); well-being fully mediated the impact of religiosity on contentment (H12b), and well-being also fully mediated the impact

of optimism on contentment (H12c). Lastly, significant path from religiosity to contentment was found through Religiosity ⇒ Optimism ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment (H14) with 95% CI: 0.305, 1.033. Model fit was computed at SRMR = 0.080, CMIN/df = 2.05, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.90, and RMSEA = 0.06, all within the acceptable limits (Byrne 2010; Cho et al. 2020; Hu and Bentler 1999; Marsh and Hocevar 1985).

Table 4. Factor loadings for the measurement model.

| Construct and Items | M | SD | SL | SE | t |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Religiosity (CRSi-20) CR = 0.76, AVE = 0.39 | | | | | |
| Experience | 4.57 | 0.53 | 0.70 | | |
| Private practice | 4.64 | 0.42 | 0.79 | 0.09 | 10.10 |
| Public practice | 4.61 | 0.53 | 0.57 | 0.10 | 8.15 |
| Ideology | 4.65 | 0.48 | 0.37 | 0.08 | 5.80 |
| Intellect | 4.15 | 0.58 | 0.62 | 0.11 | 8.82 |
| Contentment CR = 0.49, AVE = 0.36 | | | | | |
| Compared to other professions, my salary is high | 2.77 | 1.17 | 0.49 | | |
| I am satisfied with my career | 4.00 | 0.94 | 0.49 | 0.17 | 6.16 |
| Well-being (TSWQ) CR = 0.81, AVE = 0.68 | | | | | |
| Teaching efficacy | 4.35 | 0.55 | 0.90 | | |
| School connectedness | 4.41 | 0.62 | 0.75 | 0.07 | 12.74 |
| Optimism (LOT-R) CR = 0.75, AVE = 0.51 | | | | | |
| Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad | 4.61 | 0.57 | 0.76 | | |
| I'm always optimistic about my future | 4.49 | 0.62 | 0.78 | 0.10 | 11.53 |
| In uncertain times, I usually expect the best | 4.19 | 0.66 | 0.58 | 0.10 | 9.01 |
| Resilience (BRS) CR = 0.34, AVE = 0.44 | | | | | |
| I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life * | 2.70 | 1.05 | 0.79 | | |
| I usually come through difficult times with little trouble | 3.58 | 0.89 | 0.67 | 0.06 | 11.63 |
| It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens * | 2.55 | 1.02 | 0.86 | 0.07 | 15.43 |
| It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event | 3.78 | 0.94 | 0.35 | 0.07 | 5.68 |
| I have a hard time making it through stressful events * | 2.57 | 1.11 | 0.81 | 0.07 | 14.63 |
| I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times | 4.05 | 0.76 | 0.58 | 0.09 | 9.88 |

Notes: N = 296. All loadings are significant at the <0.001 level. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, SL = standardized loading, SE = standard error, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted. * Reverse coded.

Table 5. Mediating effects of resilience, optimism, and well-being between religiosity and contentment.

| Effect Type/Hypothesis | Path | Effect | 95% CI |
|--------------------------|---|--------|----------------|
| Direct effect | | | |
| H1 | Religiosity ⇒ Resilience | −0.156 | −0.288, −0.037 |
| H2 | Religiosity ⇒ Well-being | 0.173 | 0.423, 0.631 |
| H3 | Religiosity ⇒ Optimism | 0.522 | 0.416, 0.632 |
| H4 | Religiosity ⇒ Contentment | −0.178 | 0.038, 0.379 |
| H5 | Resilience ⇒ Contentment | −0.063 | −0.355, 0.054 |
| H6 | Resilience ⇒ Well-being | −0.082 | −0.168, 0.008 |
| H7 | Optimism ⇒ Well-being | 0.644 | 0.517, 0.769 |
| H8 | Optimism ⇒ Contentment | −0.163 | 0.198, 0.654 |
| H9 | Well-being ⇒ Contentment | 0.906 | 0.548, 1.344 |
| Indirect effect | | | |
| H10a | Religiosity ⇒ Resilience ⇒ Well-being | 0.023 | 0.000, 0.078 |
| H10b | Religiosity ⇒ Resilience ⇒ Contentment | 0.018 | −0.017, 0.135 |
| H11a ¹ | Religiosity ⇒ Optimism ⇒ Well-being | 0.597 | 0.426, 0.868 |
| H11b | Religiosity ⇒ Optimism ⇒ Contentment | −0.156 | −0.592, 0.116 |
| H12a | Resilience ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment | −0.044 | −0.111, 0.000 |
| H12b ² | Religiosity ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment | 0.286 | 0.080, 0.684 |
| H12c ² | Optimism ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment | 0.677 | 0.388, 1.253 |
| Paths to Contentment | | | |
| H13 | Religiosity ⇒ Resilience ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment | 0.021 | 0.002, 0.065 |
| H14 | Religiosity ⇒ Optimism ⇒ Well-being ⇒ Contentment | 0.553 | 0.305, 1.033 |
| Total effect | | 0.220 | 0.038, 0.379 |

Notes: CI = confidence interval. Hypothesis in bold denotes statistically significant results. Control variables are gender, tenure, locality, sectoral, and education. ¹ Partial mediation. ² Full mediation.

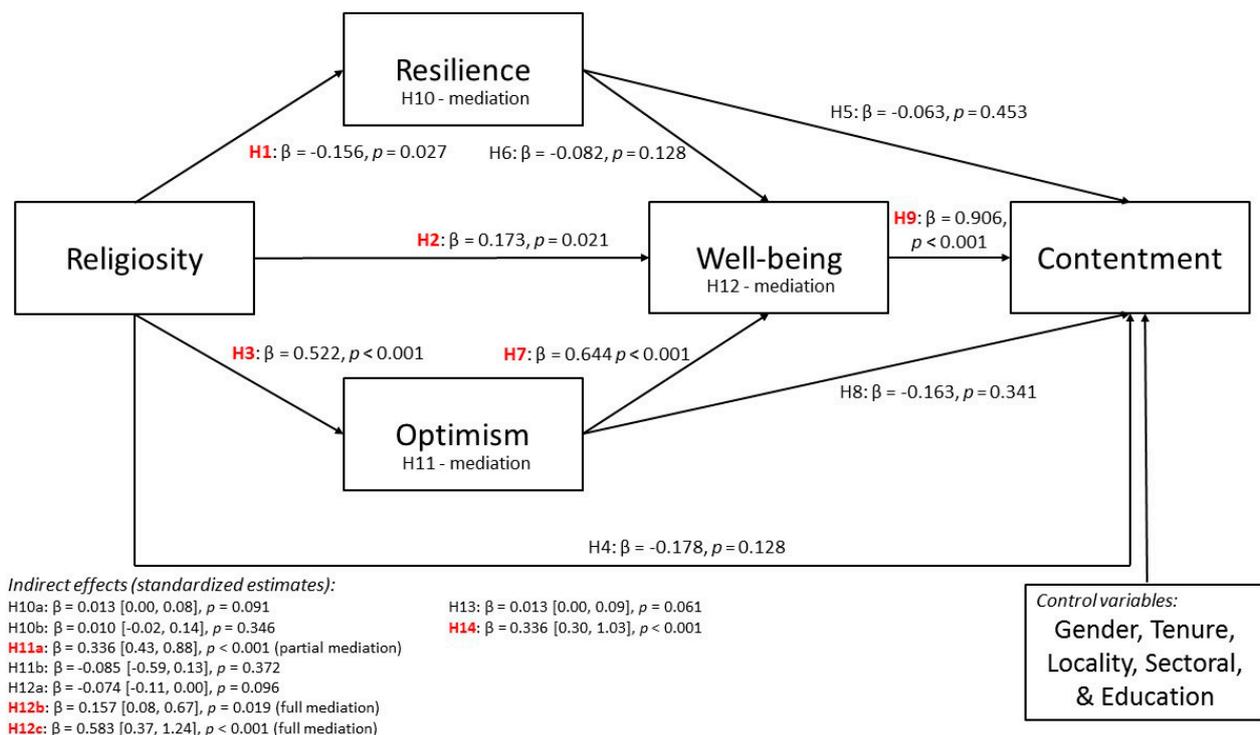


Figure 2. Mediating effects of resilience, optimism, and well-being between religiosity and contentment.

4. Discussion

Given the current pandemic-driven challenging circumstances that have had an unrivalled effect on education, this study explored the mediating roles and structural paths of resilience, optimism, and well-being in the relationship between religiosity and contentment among teachers in the Philippines. The systematic statistical analyses indicated some significant results, including significant intercorrelations, regression coefficients, partial and full mediation effects, and structural paths. These results are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.1. Intercorrelations

As expected, bivariate correlation analysis showed that religiosity, resilience, optimism, and well-being were positively and significantly correlated with each other. The significant relation between religiosity and resilience is expected, as religious dimensions are said to be associated with important resilience resources (Schwalm et al. 2021). Resilience is the ability to cope with or recover from adverse situations. It is an ability to bounce back from hard situations (Smith et al. 2008). Religiosity, as measured in this study, consists of several dimensions, including intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experience (Huber and Huber 2012). Thus, the significant relation between religiosity and resilience makes sense, particularly in the present situation of facing the COVID-19 pandemic, for the religiosity dimensions do seem to function as the resources of resilience in bouncing back from the adverse effects of COVID-19.

Religiosity also significantly correlated with optimism. Optimism is a positive belief and a mental attitude characterized by hope and confidence in a successful future. Optimists expect good and predict favorable outcomes even from the miserable things. They tend to view hardships as temporary setbacks and believe that tomorrow will be better (Scheier et al. 1994). In general, religiosity can give rise to a perspective that things happen for some reason and serve a greater purpose, which, in turn, creates a sense of optimism even when one's situation seems dire, and further directs one's outlook toward the potential that somehow everything will be all right.

No matter how religiosity has been constructed, the significant correlation between religiosity and well-being has been well documented. Subjective well-being is described as the people's evaluations of the quality of their own lives, based on their cognitive judgments and affective evaluations (Diener et al. 2018). Different correlates exist in how people appraise their well-being, ranging from individual characteristics and personalities, to values that people consider important and worth pursuing in life (Balzarotti et al. 2016; Diener et al. 2018). Among these correlates, a growing body of research suggested significant role of religiosity in people's self-perceived well-being (Diener et al. 2018; Levin and Chatters 2008; Vander-Weele 2017). In other words, religiosity is said to work as a protective factor or resource generator in ameliorating the stressful outcomes generally associated with external adversities (such as pandemic) or internal vulnerabilities, as well as provide strategies for coping with specific life stressors.

As expected, there was a significant correlation between resilience and well-being. Harms et al. (2018) said that resilience tends to have two somewhat distinct meanings. The first is that resilience is described as the ability to resist destructive forces for the survival. The second is that resilience means bouncing back or recovering from those effects of destructive forces, and thus it emphasizes resilience as a means of thriving. Harms and colleagues said this distinction is important as people facing adversities can go further than merely withstanding stressful events to enhancing their well-being.

There were also significant correlations between optimism and well-being, between optimism and contentment, and between well-being and contentment. Optimism, which is the generalized expectancy for positive outcomes, is generally linked with the quality-of-life outcomes, including well-being dimensions and contentment. Further, contentment is a potential correlate of general well-being, where well-being in this study has been conceived as the teachers' teaching efficacy and school connectedness (Renshaw et al. 2015).

4.2. Regressions and Mediation Effects

Religiosity significantly predicted resilience, well-being, and optimism, but did not predict contentment. Religiosity's significant effect on resilience is in tune with the results reported by various studies (see Fradelos et al. 2018). For example, people's religiosity acts as a protective factor by enhancing the resilience in dealing with mental illnesses (Kasen et al. 2012); religiosity enhances resilience, which facilitates the individuals to maintain a positive perspective in the midst of life's adversaries (Connor et al. 2003); and religiosity has a positive effect on resilience, strengthening the assumption that there is a direct association between religiosity and resilience (Saeidi et al. 2010).

Religiosity's effect on various dimensions of well-being, including hope and optimism, have been well documented (see Cook et al. 2014; Diener et al. 2011). Tay et al. (2014) suggested many conceptual reasons why religiosity would promote well-being. Using a multilevel perspective, they proposed psychological (or individual) and social (or national) mechanisms for this process. At the psychological level, there exist inherent universal human needs (such as the need to belong) that, when fulfilled through religiosity, enhance well-being. In other words, religiosity fulfills universal human needs. At the social level, religiosity serves as a buffer to well-being against difficult life circumstances, and in turn, it also augments personal religiosity effects on well-being.

Additionally, analyses indicated some significant mediation (indirect) effects. Taken together, results showed that optimism partially mediated the impact of religiosity on well-being; well-being fully mediated the impact of religiosity on contentment, and well-being also fully mediated the impact of optimism on contentment. Resilience didn't have a significant mediating effect.

Religiosity's association with well-being through optimism explains that religiosity can give rise to an optimistic perspective that things happen for some reason and serve a greater purpose, which, in turn, leads to significant levels of well-being. Particularly, both the ideology part of religiosity with its belief system as a source and the cognitive nature of optimism as an intermediary, create a desirable effect on well-being, particularly on

teachers' subjective feeling of professional efficacy and school connectedness in educational settings. In terms of efficacy, teachers seem to feel more successful, learn better, deeply care for pupils, and cherish their accomplishments when they rely on their religiosity and entertain optimistic perspectives. In terms of connectedness, religiosity that is mediated by optimism result in teachers being themselves at school, have a sense of belonging to the organization, and feel being cared for and respected.

Well-being fully mediated the impact of religiosity on contentment. As assessed in this study, contentment included financial fulfillment and career satisfaction. At least in this study, people's religiosity, whether it is ideological or experiential or practical, could influence their career and financial fulfillment only through the intermediary feeling of work efficacy and institutional connectedness.

Well-being also fully mediated the impact of optimism on contentment. As conceptualized by Scheier and colleagues (Scheier et al. 1994), optimism is a positive mental attitude that predicts or expects favorable outcomes even from the adverse things. Such a conceptualization of optimism as a cognitive belief or mental attitude doesn't directly influence the instrumental and behavioral aspect of contentment in terms of financial and career satisfaction. Rather, an affective component of well-being, that is, feeling efficient and connected (Renshaw et al. 2015), seems to mediate the effect of optimism on teachers' contentment.

4.3. Structural Path

Significant path from religiosity to contentment was found through optimism and well-being (Religiosity \Rightarrow Optimism \Rightarrow Well-being \Rightarrow Contentment). In other words, in this study, as the results indicated, religiosity didn't have a direct association with or effect on contentment. Particularly, for this sample of Filipino teachers who are challenged by the adversaries of the COVID-19 pandemic in effectively carrying out their teaching profession, their religious dimension had an indirect effect on their financial satisfaction and career fulfillment only through optimistic mindset, job efficacy, and institutional connectedness.

In positive psychology literature, contentment has been conceptualized as an aspect of the broader constructs of well-being or quality of life. Thus, under this conceptualization, contentment has been viewed as the positive affective basis for more global well-being. In the lives of people, contentment functions as an antidote to feeling of need, jealousy, and miserliness (Srivastava and Singh 2015). Therefore, given that optimists are those who expect favorable outcomes in life, and in fact, strive to realize those expectations and even subjectively experience the desired outcomes under given circumstances (Scheier et al. 1994), and moreover, contentment being an affective basis for more global well-being (Srivastava and Singh 2015), it does make sense that the significant structural path from religiosity to contentment was found through optimism and well-being.

In other words, religiosity dimensions give rise to favorable expectations, which further simultaneously influence the teachers' instructional efficacy and institutional connectedness, and consequently produce their subjective contentment in terms of both financial and career satisfaction. Hence, as a conclusion, the structural path analysis indicates that one's beliefs and values (religiosity) influence cognition (optimistic expectations), which in turn, predicts one's affect (well-being indicators) and the consequent evaluative attitude (contentment components).

5. Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a major disruption of education. Majority of the world's educational institutions are still being affected by partial or full school closures and alternative methods, leading to many challenges to students, teachers, and institutions. Taking these realities into consideration, this research project investigated the contentment of teachers in the Philippines, as impacted by religiosity and mediated by resilience, optimism, and well-being. The results indicated that religiosity has both direct and indirect effects on contentment. Particularly, optimism and well-being had significant

mediating effects on contentment. The structural path model suggested a significant path in the direction of religiosity \Rightarrow optimism \Rightarrow well-being \Rightarrow contentment. It could be said that the religious belief system of the participants as a primary source and the cognitive nature of optimism as an intermediary element might have created a desirable effect on both well-being and contentment of the teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These significant results suggest the single and collective usefulness of religiosity dimensions, resilience, optimism, and well-being indicators in deriving contentment of the teachers in the midst of pandemic adversity and stressful challenges. For instance, in overcoming challenges, religious dimensions have been associated with important resilient resources in bouncing back from the adverse effects. In addition, religiosity can create an optimistic perspective that things have a greater purpose in the midst of struggles and lead to corresponding positive evaluations of life. Further, as the path analysis indicated, religious dimensions work through optimistic mindset, job efficacy, and institutional connectedness to gain financial satisfaction and career fulfillment.

In spite of the aforementioned methodical strengths and useful results, this study has its own limitations, including some scale item and reliability concerns, homogenous sample population, and the lack of theoretical base in drawing valid causal mechanisms among the study variables. For example, based on previous empirical studies, only two items were deliberately included to represent the importance of career satisfaction and financial remuneration as part of teachers' contentment during the crisis, such as COVID-19 pandemic. Even though inter-item correlation of the contentment measure suggested acceptable reliability, it would have further validated the significant results of this study if multiple items and dimensions were included. Future research could answer this limitation.

In this study, particularly the homogenous sample, in which about half of the study participants were in the age group of 21–30 years old, about 67% worked in the sectoral (Catholic/Christian) schools, and almost all (97%) were affiliated with Catholic/Christian religion, might have strongly influenced their religiosity and contentment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since most of the participants belonged to the Catholic/Christian background, which strongly endorses structured set of ideas and beliefs in the religious processes and activities, the ideology dimension of religiosity measure of the participants was high in this study. Future research designs could replicate these results by including different age groups, affiliated to various religions, and working in both sectoral and public schools or other organizations.

Moreover, as this study explored the relationship between religiosity and contentment among the teachers in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic, the perceptions of the pandemic by the participants were not systematically measured. The view of the pandemic was not a variable but seen as a general context of the study. Therefore, further investigation can be carried out in the future research studies that take the similar approach and include the perceptions of the participants toward the existing conditions. Finally, although this study employed regression and path analyses, it is warranted not to make causal conclusions, as the results indicate only some significant paths among many potential paths. Future research can be designed to investigate the possible causal relationships among these variables.

As a conclusion, future research projects can be designed to replicate these results with different samples of various religious, national and cultural backgrounds, and in different contexts other than education. In addition, future research studies must use relevant and more reliable measurements and employ rigorous analyses to affirm the valid and significant results from this study, and to expand the research scope.

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