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## RELIGIOUS MEANING SYSTEM, RELIGIOUS COPING, AND EUDAIMONISTIC WELL-BEING – DIRECT AND INDIRECT RELATIONS

The article concerns the relationships between religion, analyzed within the framework of the religious meaning system, and religious coping as well as eudaimonistic well-being in the mediational perspective of meaning in life. In order to verify the hypotheses, two empirical studies ( $N = 187$  and  $N = 177$  people) were carried out to determine the nature and extent of the relationships between the above factors. The results showed that the religious meaning system was positively linked to eudaimonistic well-being, while negative religious strategy showed a negative relationship with it. There was also a positive relationship between religiosity and the dimensions of meaning in life: presence and search. The presence of meaning in life, in contrast to search, turned out to be a mediator in the relationships of the religious meaning system and religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being.

**Keywords:** religious meaning system, religious coping, eudaimonistic well-being, sense of meaning in life.

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Relations Between Religiousness and Eudaimonistic Well-Being**

Nowadays, religiousness is mostly understood in terms of the significance and meaning expressed by human efforts directed towards the realm of the sacred (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Paloutzian & Park, 2013). Treating religious-

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ness in terms of significance and meaning is the primary determinant of the religious meaning system, which is one of the forms of religiousness. The religious meaning system can be understood as an idiosyncratic system of beliefs regarding oneself and relationships with other people and the world, whose main characteristic is its inherent relationship with the sphere of Holiness (*the sacred*) as well as goal- and meaning-directed factors (Krok, 2009). The two dimensions of the religious meaning system are: orientation and meaningfulness. The first dimension allows individuals to understand the world and their own life, while the second dimension provides opportunities to formulate interpretations of one's life in terms of meaning and purpose.

The primary justification for examining religiousness within the framework of the religious meaning system originates from the observation that religious beliefs help an individual to explain and interpret reality in terms of meaning and purpose. For many people, religious beliefs express strivings to understand their place in relation to the world and other people (Hood et al., 2009; Krause & Hayward, 2012). The vast majority of religions try to find answers about the origin of the universe and man, historical events, ethical and moral standards, as well as meaning and purpose in life. Approaching the world and one's life from a religious point of view makes it possible to build a coherent and legitimate system of meanings in terms of which life events are interpreted.

The second form of religiousness – religious coping – indicates that religiousness affects strategies of coping with difficult situations in different ways (Pargament et al., 1992). Pargament (1997) argues that religion plays an important role at various stages of stressful situations: from their assessment to physical and mental consequences. He proposes treating religiousness as part of the orientation system, which is connected with the search for meaning in relation to the sacred that consequently facilitates coping processes.

Research on religious coping indicated the presence of two patterns of coping: positive and negative (Pargament & Park, 1995; Pargament Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). The positive pattern is associated with adaptive flexibility as well as with an individual's positive involvement in the realm of religion. The exemplary forms are: search for spiritual and social support, benevolent religious appraisal, and collaboration with God. The negative pattern of religious coping includes such forms as: dissatisfaction with God and the Church, and negative re-evaluation of the events as a punishment from God, a manifestation of God's failure, or demonic activities. Positive coping strategies show a positive relationship with spiritual growth, satisfaction with life, and inner integration, while negative strategies are connected with depression, anxiety, and hopelessness (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005).

The data demonstrates that the religious meaning system and religious coping are related to eudaimonistic well-being, with human happiness understood in terms of values and goals (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Trzebińska, 2008). The present article focuses on the concept of eudaimonistic well-being proposed by Ryff (1989, 1996), in which the pursuit of happiness is regarded as striving for a good life through implementing individual and societal values. Eudaimonistic well-being consists of six dimensions: (1) autonomy – the ability to act in accordance with established principles and beliefs; (2) environmental mastery – the ability to deal with various situations in the world; (3) personal growth – using one's own potential and developing new skills; (4) positive relationships with others – satisfaction with friendly and loving relations with other people; (5) purpose in life – the ability to find meaning in life and carry out life tasks; (6) self-acceptance – positive and realistic attitudes toward oneself.

Although the results of the existing studies point to links between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being, these links are complex in nature. The religious meaning system shows weak relationships with two of the six dimensions of eudaimonistic well-being: negative links with autonomy and positive associations with purpose in life (Krok, 2009). As regards the relationship of religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being, there is a lack of research on these factors. Previous studies have only taken into account the relationships between religious coping and other measures related to eudaimonistic well-being. According to Pargament (1997), the relationship between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being can be better explained by introducing religious coping.

Maltby and Day (2003) investigated associations between religious coping and evaluations of difficult situations in the following dimensions: risks, challenges, and losses. The results showed that positive coping favorably affects the approach to stressful situations by interpreting them in terms of personal development and growth, which are the dimensions present in the framework of eudaimonistic well-being. Studies conducted by Rammohan and his colleagues (Rammohan et al., 2002) found that religiousness and religious coping were a good predictor of well-being, but in a global way. According to the authors, this means that people facing difficult situations use their religious resources in order to preserve well-being. However, it is difficult to say what is the role of negative coping in shaping well-being.

Some forms of religiousness, also present in religious coping, are positively associated with eudaimonistic well-being. Lawler-Row and Elliott (2009) found a positive link between prayer and existential well-being, which is related to eudaimonistic well-being, while Ekas and colleagues (Ekas, Whitman, & Shiv-

ers, 2009) pointed out a beneficial role of religious beliefs in the general well-being of mothers of children with autism. Although the results do not relate directly to the relationship of religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being, they indicate – through an analysis of the related terms – potential associations among the factors examined in this article.

### **The Mediating Role of Meaning in Life**

In the context of the above analyses, the question arises whether relationships between dimensions of religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being are direct or whether they may be mediated by other factors, such as meaning in life, which plays an important role in personality and mental health (Frankl, 1979; Klamut, 2002; Popielski, 1993). According to Steger (2011), meaning in life can be defined as “the extent to which people comprehend, make sense of, or see significance in their lives, accompanied by the degree to which they perceive themselves to have a purpose, mission, or overarching aim in life” (p. 682). Meaning in life encompasses two dimensions: presence and search. The presence of meaning in life means that a person has a clear meaning and purpose in his/her life, and that he/she is aware of his/her current mental state and its psychological causes. The search for meaning in life reflects the pursuit of significant, important, and meaningful elements of life.

The latest research has suggested that meaning in life is associated both with religion and well-being (Krause & Hayward, 2012; Krok, 2011; Park, 2013). This is mainly due to the presence of values and goals in the above constructs. Religion provides motivation and meaningful purposes; it also describes the ways of achieving these objectives. In addition, religion contains moral and ethical values through which people form their own lives and by which they are guided in their activities. Goals and values are also important in achieving hedonistic, but above all eudaimonistic happiness directed towards understanding life in terms of values.

Additional confirmation of the mediational function of meaning in life in the relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being is provided by findings in related areas. Steger and Frazier (2005) found that meaning in life was a mediating factor between religious behavior and satisfaction with life. In addition, meaning in life proved to be a mediator in the relationship of religiousness with optimism and self-esteem, whose factors are related to eudaimonistic well-being. In other studies, existential meaning of life served as a mediator in the relations between cognitive and social dimensions of religiousness and well-

-being (Krok, 2009). However, it should be noted that in most cases meaning in life was a suppressor in relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being.

A meta-analysis of the available findings enables us to conclude that the reasons for ambiguous results on the relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being may lie in the differences in the way in which religiousness is operationalized. Different descriptions of the religious sphere preferred by researchers may lead to slightly diverse results. In addition, a selection of the study group can have an impact on the results; for example, the relationship between the above variables is different in the groups of healthy and sick individuals.

The above findings having been taken into account, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

1. The religious meaning system and positive religious coping strategy have positive associations with eudaimonistic well-being, while the negative strategy has negative relations with it.
2. The presence of meaning in life is more strongly associated with eudaimonistic well-being than the search dimension.
3. The presence of meaning in life is a stronger mediator in relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being than the search for meaning.

## STUDY 1

### Aim and Participants

The first study was preliminary and intended to verify the initial assumption about the positive relationship of the religious meaning system and religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being. The participants were 187 people (97 women and 90 men) aged 19 to 62 years. The average age of the respondents was 39 years ( $SD = 9.45$ ). The study was anonymous.

### Research Procedure

The study used three tools: the Religious Meaning System Questionnaire (RMS), the Brief RCOPE Scale, and the Psychological Well-Being Scale.

The Religious Meaning System Questionnaire devised by Krok (2009) measures religiousness expressed in terms of meaning. It includes two dimensions: (1) religious orientation and (2) religious meaningfulness. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for the scales are as follows: the Orienta-

tion scale  $\alpha = .92$ ; the Meaningfulness scale  $\alpha = .89$ ; the overall score  $\alpha = .93$ . The test-retest reliability coefficient for the 20-item scale is .81. The values of criterion validity checked by comparison with the Centrality of Religiosity Scale were as follows, respectively: the overall score – .79; the Orientation scale – .80; the Meaningfulness scale – .77. The measure consists of 20 items.

The Brief RCOPE Scale (Polish version) is a questionnaire for measuring religious coping (Pargament et al., 1998). The abridged version (Brief RCOPE) consists of 14 items and measures the two coping strategies: positive and negative. The scale was adapted into Polish by Jarosz (2011). The reliability of the subscales is as follows: Positive Coping – .86, Negative Coping – .74. Their criterion validity was confirmed by high correlations (from .50 to .87) with the dimensions of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale includes 42 items and consists of six subscales: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Positive Relations With Others, Personal Growth, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance (Ryff, 1989). The Polish adaptation was done by Krok (2009). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability coefficients for the scales range from .72 to .86. The validity was checked by correlations with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) – correlation coefficients for the scales ranged from .74 to .31 – and with Beck's Depression Scale: correlation coefficients ranged from -.35 to -.64.

## Results

In the first phase Pearson's  $r$  correlations were calculated between the religious meaning system, religious coping, and eudaimonistic well-being (Table 1).

Table 1  
Pearson's  $r$  Correlations Between the Religious Meaning System, Religious Coping, and Eudaimonistic Well-Being

Eudaimonistic well-being	The religious meaning system			Religious coping	
	Religious orientation	Religious meaningfulness	Overall result	Positive	Negative
Autonomy	-.01	.02	-.01	-.04	-.32***
Environmental mastery	.01	.08	.04	.04	-.32***
Personal growth	.05	.13	.09	.10	-.27***
Positive relations with others	.15*	.19**	.17*	.12	-.31***
Purpose in life	.25***	.29***	.28***	.14	-.22**
Self-acceptance	.06	.11	.09	.06	-.45***
Overall result	.11	.18**	.15*	.09	-.42***

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

A positive correlation occurred between the overall results for the religious meaning system and eudaimonistic well-being, while a negative correlation was found between negative religious coping strategy and eudaimonistic well-being. This means that an increase in religiousness based on a meaning system will be linked to higher eudaimonistic well-being. At the same time, along with increases in the use of negative religious coping strategies well-being will decrease. Positive correlations were found between the dimensions of orientation and meaningfulness and the two dimensions of well-being: positive relationships with others and purpose in life. As regards religious coping, only the negative strategy negatively correlated with all the dimensions of well-being.

In the next stage of the analysis, stepwise regression analysis was conducted for the dimensions of eudaimonistic well-being on the results for the religious meaning system and religious coping (Table 2).

Table 2  
*Stepwise Regression Analysis for the Dimensions of Eudaimonistic Well-Being on the Scores on the Religious Meaning System and Religious Coping*

	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Autonomy:</i> $R = .32; R^2 = .11; F(1, 185) = 20.51; p < .001$			
Negative coping	-.32	-4.52	.000
<i>Environmental mastery:</i> $R = .36; R^2 = .13; F(1, 185) = 6.48; p < .01$			
Negative coping	-.35	-4.73	.000
<i>Personal growth:</i> $R = .35; R^2 = .12; F(2, 184) = 5.98; p < .001$			
Negative coping	-.31	-4.11	.000
Positive coping	.27	2.12	.035
<i>Positive relations with others:</i> $R = .36; R^2 = .13; F(2, 184) = 12.99; p < .001$			
Negative coping	-.31	-4.34	.000
Religious meaningfulness	.19	2.68	.008
<i>Purpose in life:</i> $R = .36; R^2 = .13; F(2, 184) = 12.97; p < .001$			
Religious meaningfulness	.29	4.05	.000
Negative coping	-.22	-3.09	.002
<i>Self-acceptance:</i> $R = .48; R^2 = .27; F(2, 184) = 25.42; p < .001$			
Negative coping	-.48	-7.08	.000

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Positive coping	.14	2.09	.038
Overall result: $R = .45; R^2 = .21; F(2, 184) = 22.92; p < .001$			
Negative coping	-.42	-6.22	.000
Religious meaningfulness	.18	2.67	.008

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Two dimensions of well-being – autonomy and environmental mastery – were explained by negative coping. The lower the ability to act according to individual rules and cope in the world, the more often people use a negative strategy based on religion. The dimensions of personal growth and self-acceptance are explained by both coping strategies. People will have a greater ability to use their potential and more positive attitudes towards themselves if they apply more positive and less negative religious coping strategies. The dimensions of positive relations with others and purpose in life are explained by negative coping and religious meaningfulness. People will have more satisfying interpersonal relationships and constructive life tasks if they less frequently use a negative strategy and more often employ the religious meaning system. The overall score on well-being is explained by negative coping and religious meaningfulness. People will have a higher level of well-being if they are less likely to use negative coping and more likely to use religious meaning.

The results demonstrated relations of dimensions of the religious meaning system and religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being, which gives an impulse to carry out further research with meaning in life as a mediator.

## STUDY 2

### Aim and Participants

The second study was to verify whether meaning in life can be a mediator in the relationship of the religious meaning system and religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being. The study involved 177 individuals (92 women and 85 men) aged 21 to 63 years. The average age of the respondents was 41 years ( $SD = 10.21$ ). The study was anonymous.

### Research Procedure

The participants were given a set of four questionnaires: the Religious Meaning System Questionnaire, the Brief RCOPE Scale, the Psychological Well-Being Scale, and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire. Descriptions of the first three questionnaires have already been presented in the previous section.

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire was developed by Steger and associates (Steger et al., 2006). It is a tool consisting of 10 items which aims to examine two aspects of meaning in life: presence and search. The questionnaire was adapted into Polish in accordance with the procedures for the adaptation of psychological tests (Krok, 2009). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability coefficients are as follows: .82 for the Presence scale and .83 for the Search scale. Validity, checked by using a correlation method with the Purpose in Life Scale (PIL), turned out to be satisfactory and close to that of the original version (.59 for Presence and .25 for Search).

### Results

First, Pearson's  $r$  correlations were calculated between the religious meaning system, religious coping, and meaning in life (Table 3).

Table 3

*Pearson's r Correlations Between the Religious Meaning System, Religious Coping, and Meaning in Life*

Meaning in life	The religious meaning system			Religious coping	
	Religious orientation	Religious meaningfulness	Overall result	Positive	Negative
Presence	.34***	.30***	.34***	.23**	-.23**
Search	.26***	.16*	.23**	.22**	-.06

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

Statistically significant relationships were observed in the case of all but one result (negative strategy and search). A higher level of religious meaning expressed in terms of orientation and meaningfulness is associated with higher levels of the presence of and search for meaning in life. In addition, a higher degree of positive religious coping is linked with stronger presence of and search for meaning. The more frequently people use a negative strategy, the less meaning in life they have.

Then, the relationship between meaning in life and eudaimonistic well-being was examined (Table 4).

Table 4

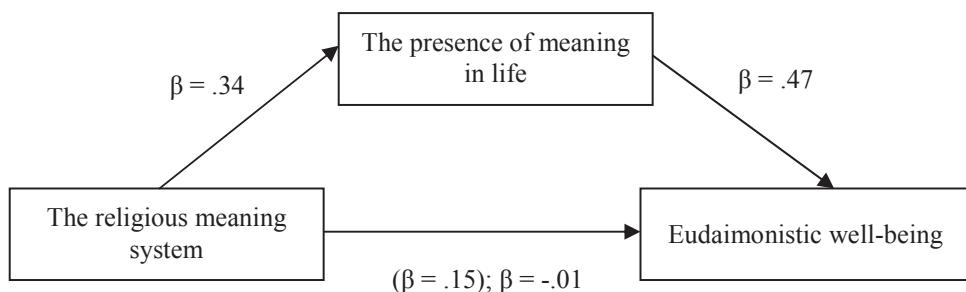
*Pearson's r Correlations Between Meaning in Life and Eudaimonistic Well-Being*

Eudaimonistic well-being	Meaning in life	
	Presence	Search
Autonomy	.28***	-.04
Environmental mastery	.31***	-.02
Personal growth	.37***	.15*
Positive relations with others	.29***	.22**
Purpose in life	.44***	-.00
Self-acceptance	.44***	-.03
Overall result	.45***	.06

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

The results indicated that the presence of meaning in life was positively associated with the overall result and particular dimensions of eudaimonistic well-being. It can thus be concluded that a higher level of presence is connected with a higher degree of well-being in the following domains: independence, the ability to cope with the surrounding world, the ability to use one's own potential, maintaining relationships of friendship and love, finding meaning and purpose in life, and a positive attitude to oneself. Searching for meaning in life positively correlates only with the development of personal and positive relationships with other people.

The most important stage of the statistical analyses was to determine whether meaning in life is a mediator in the relationship of the religious meaning system and religious coping with eudaimonistic well-being. In the first equation, the overall score on the religious meaning system was an independent variable, the presence of meaning in life was a mediator, and overall eudaimonistic well-being was a dependent variable (Figure 1).

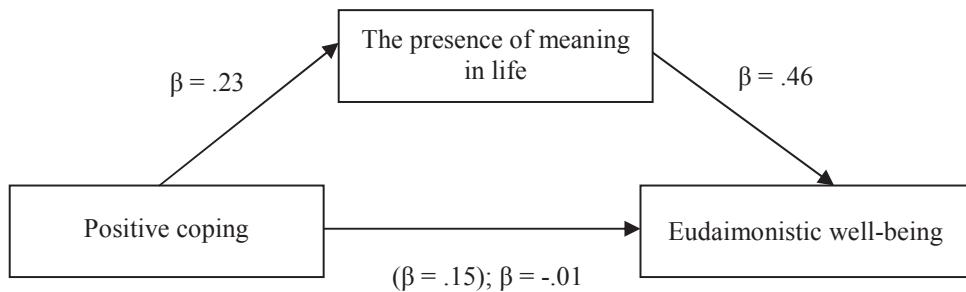


*Figure 1.* The mediational role of the presence of meaning in life between the religious meaning system and eudaimonistic well-being.

In the first regression equation, the religious meaning system was a significant predictor of eudaimonistic well-being,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $t(175) = 1.98$ ,  $p < .05$ . This means that the first condition of mediation was met. In the second equation, the religious meaning system positively influenced the presence of meaning in life,  $\beta = .34$ ,  $t(175) = 4.71$ ,  $p < .001$ . Then, the results of regression analysis with the religious meaning system and the presence of meaning in life as explanatory variables in relation to well-being showed that the presence of meaning significantly affects well-being,  $\beta = .47$ ,  $t(174) = 6.65$ ,  $p < .001$ . After introducing the presence of meaning in life as a mediator, the  $\beta$ -effect weight of the religious meaning system changed its sign and evidently decreased to the value of -.01 at  $t(174) = -0.15$ ,  $p < .88$ . According to mediational calculations, the value of the Sobel test was statistically significant ( $z = 3.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results confirm that the presence of meaning in life is a mediator in the relationship between the religious meaning system and eudaimonistic well-being.

In the second equation, in which the overall score on the religious meaning system was an independent variable, the search for meaning in life was a mediator, and the overall eudaimonistic well-being was a dependent variable, there was no statistically significant result,  $\beta = .03$ ,  $t(174) = 0.38$ ,  $p < .71$ .

The next stage of analysis included the following data: an independent variable – positive religious coping, a mediator – the presence of meaning in life, and a dependent variable – eudaimonistic well-being (Figure 2).

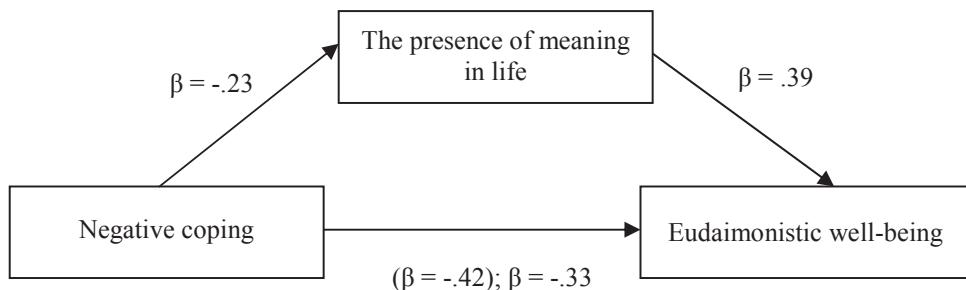


*Figure 2.* The mediational role of the presence of meaning in life between positive coping and eudaimonistic well-being.

The initial results of the regression analysis showed no significant relationship between positive religious coping and eudaimonistic well-being,  $\beta = .09$ ,  $t(175) = 1.22$ ,  $p < .22$ . However, some authors (Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002) believe that this does not preclude further mediation analysis, which may turn out to be statistically significant after the introduction of a mediator. In the next equation, positive coping affected the presence of meaning in life,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $t(175) = 3.15$ ,  $p < .01$ . The regression analysis with positive coping and the presence of meaning in life as explanatory variables on well-being demonstrated that the presence significantly affected well-being,  $\beta = .46$ ,  $t(174) = 6.86$ ,  $p < .001$ . With the presence of meaning in life included as a mediator, the  $\beta$ -effect of positive coping strategy changed its sign and decreased to the value of  $-.01$  at  $t(174) = 0.26$ ,  $p < .80$ . The value of the Sobel test was statistically significant ( $z = 2.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In this case, the presence of meaning in life is a mediator in the relationship between positive religious coping and eudaimonistic well-being.

In the next mediation analysis, in which the independent variable was positive religious coping, the mediator was the search for meaning in life, and the dependent variable was eudaimonistic well-being, the result was non-significant,  $\beta = .04$ ,  $t(174) = 0.55$ ,  $p < .58$ .

The next stage of the analysis took into account negative religious coping as an independent variable, the presence of meaning in life as a mediator, and eudaimonistic well-being as a dependent variable (Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* The mediational role of the presence of meaning in life between negative coping and eudaimonistic well-being.

The first regression equation, in which negative coping was a predictor and eudaimonistic well-being was the dependent variable, turned out to be statistically significant,  $\beta = -.42$ ,  $t(175) = -6.11$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results of the second equation showed that negative coping was negatively associated with the presence of meaning in life,  $\beta = -.23$ ,  $t(175) = -3.16$ ,  $p < .01$ . In the third equation with negative coping and the presence of meaning in life as explanatory variables, presence significantly influenced well-being (dependent variable),  $\beta = .39$ ,  $t(174) = 6.12$ ,  $p < .001$ . At the same time, the results of this regression showed a decrease in the  $\beta$ -effect of negative coping to the value of  $-.33$  with the presence of meaning in life taken into account as a mediator,  $t(174) = -5.11$ ,  $p < .001$ . The overall effect of the Sobel test was statistically significant ( $z = -2.93$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The fact that the  $\beta$ -effect in the third equation is statistically significant points to partial mediation.

In the last mediational analysis with negative coping as an independent variable, the search for meaning in life as a mediator, and eudaimonistic well-being as a dependent variable, the result turned out to be statistically non-significant,  $\beta = -.06$ ;  $t(175) = -0.80$ ;  $p < .42$ .

## DISCUSSION

The above studies provide new evidence on relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being and point to the mediating role of meaning in life in these relationships. Previous studies in this area were inconclusive in regard to establishing precise relationships between different forms of religious-

ness and dimensions of meaning in life and eudaimonistic well-being (Lawler-Row & Elliott, 2009; Rammohan et al., 2002; Steger & Frazier, 2005).

The results showed that the religious meaning system and religious coping are partially connected with the dimensions of eudaimonistic well-being. Associations occurred between the overall scores on the religious meaning system and negative religious coping and eudaimonistic well-being. However, their character was different than expected – an increase in religiousness based on the meaning system was linked with a higher level of well-being expressed in terms of a good life and values, while a rise in using a negative coping strategy was associated with a decrease in well-being. However, there was no relationship between the use of the positive coping strategy and well-being. This allows us to partially verify the first hypothesis, which proposed positive relationships of the religious meaning system and the positive religious coping strategy with eudaimonistic well-being as well as negative relationships with the negative strategy.

These results confirm earlier evidence that religiousness should be examined from both the individual (e.g., thinking about religion, private prayer) and social (e.g., participation in church services, membership in religious communities) perspectives (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Paloutzian & Park, 2013). At the same time, the studies reported in this paper have extended the existing knowledge about the relationships of religiousness with eudaimonistic well-being by indicating that the religious meaning system is associated with well-being in terms of values and goals and that religious coping is associated with well-being only in the case of the negative strategy. Therefore, well-being depends more on avoiding negative thinking about one's life, questioning the love of God, or treating adverse events as a punishment from God than on the use of positive religious coping strategies (e.g., seeking closeness to God or implementing tasks in accordance with one's religion). In this sense, the results clarify the conclusions formulated by Maltby and Day (2003) that the optimal role of religiousness in shaping personal development and growth is not only to highlight positive religious behavior, but also to avoid its negative forms.

Another research question concentrated on the relationships of meaning in life with religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being. The results indicated that both the presence of and search for meaning in life are related to the religious meaning system and religious coping. A person characterized by religious orientation and meaning and applying positive religious coping strategies will experience meaning in life and try to develop it as well. It is thus fully legitimate to analyse religiousness in terms of a meaning system that connects the realm of

religion with the possibilities of interpreting the world and events through the prism of meaning and purpose (Hood et al., 2009; Krok, 2009; Park, 2013).

As regards the relationship between meaning in life and well-being, significant results were found mainly for the presence dimension. A higher level of the presence of meaning in life was associated with a greater degree of eudaimonistic well-being in terms of independent actions, the ability to cope in the world, using one's potential, maintaining friendly and loving relationships, finding purpose in life, as well as having positive relations with oneself. As regards the search dimension, it was connected with well-being only to a small degree. This confirms the second hypothesis, which proposed that the presence of meaning in life is more strongly associated with eudaimonistic well-being than search for meaning in life.

The presence of meaning in life is a motivating factor which enables individuals to achieve life satisfaction based on values and the good. Experiencing meaning in life empowers a person to interpret and organize knowledge, develop self-esteem, and identify the essential things (Krok, 2011; Steger, 2011). When people have a clear meaning and purpose in their life and the awareness of the potential causes of their current state, they will be able to constructively shape and develop their own happiness on the basis of values.

The main research question was whether the dimensions of meaning in life are mediators in relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being. The results showed that only the presence of meaning in life is a mediator in the relationships of the religious meaning system and religious coping strategies with well-being. This factor proved to be a full mediator for the religious meaning system and positive coping strategy as well as a partial mediator for the negative strategy. Therefore, it can be stated that the third hypothesis, proposing this direction, was verified.

Confirming the mediational function of the presence of meaning in life in the relationships of the religious meaning system and religious coping strategies with eudaimonistic well-being permits us to more fully comprehend previous studies in a different perspective. Although they pointed to links between religious behavior and well-being, they did not take into account the mediational function of meaning in life (Thune-Boyle, Stygall, Keshtgar, & Newman 2006; Rosmarin et al., 2009). The present results demonstrate the important role of meaning in life in relations between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being. Trying to find an explanation for this state of affairs, it is possible to offer the following interpretation: because religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being relate to perceiving life in terms of purpose and meaningfulness, the factor representing

meaning in life may serve as a mediator. Consequently, the structural similarity of the two constructs – religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being – is revealed at the level of meaning and sense.

Analyses of the results enable us to formulate two final conclusions. First, the factors of meaning and purpose play a significant role both in religious beliefs and in mechanisms responsible for the impact of religiousness on human functioning. By providing people with interpretations of the world and various life events, such as suffering and illness, religion helps in developing a relatively coherent and meaningful vision of reality in which even incomprehensible and traumatic events may have their inherent meaning (Park, 2013). Second, religion can play a positive role in global life satisfaction on condition that meaning in life is present in one's mind. In other words, a person must be convinced that his/her life is coherent and purposeful. It will allow the person the perceive his/her own life in terms of meaning and significance.

There are many ways in which religious factors can affect well-being. On the one hand, they perform a positive function by providing a value system and indicating ways of acting; on the other hand, they can be nonadaptive, which will lead to negative consequences in stressful situations – for example, to denying or blaming God. Further research should examine the precise role of positive religious coping strategies in the formation of well-being, which has not been found in the current study. In addition, it would be interesting to explore a value system in the relationships between religiousness and eudaimonistic well-being, thus making it possible to explain the mechanisms of associations between values, religion, and satisfaction with life domains.

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