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In search of religious individuals' career success pattern: "to be rich but not only for me"

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Abstract
The present study examines the nexus of religiosity and two career-success elements: positive impact and financial success. The cross-sectional analysis from 985 individuals of various religious backgrounds in Indonesia reveals that collectively religiosity positively relates to the importance of both positive impacts and financial success. Positive impact importance also positively relates to financial success importance, and it partially mediates the relationship between religiosity and financial success importance. The partial mediation indicates that when religious individuals aim for financial success, they will use their financial resources for their own religious fulfillment and for others. This remark illustrates "to be rich but not only for me" phrase in the title. In addition to the combined results of four major religions (Islam, Christianity—divided into Protestantism and Catholicism—Hinduism, and Buddhism), we also explore each religion separately within this study.

Keywords Religion · Religiosity · Career success · Career · Positive impact · Financial success

Introduction

Considering the increasing aspiration of workers to bring their whole identities, including religion, to work (Miller & Ewest, 2015), the roles of religion in the workplace remain wide open and worthy of further examination. For all major religions, researchers believe that religious values contribute to individuals' work and career orientation. In particular, studies found that the teachings of Christianity (Lewis &

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Hardin, 2002), particularly Catholicism (Carlson, 1964; Hernandez et al., 2011), Islam (Mogra, 2013), Hinduism (Ramstedt, 2008), and Buddhism (Marques, 2014) influence the work and career orientations of the believers. Nevertheless, despite the ever-growing attention to religion in the workplace, knowledge about career success for religious personnel remains limited.

Career success is a vital concept to determine the aspects individuals perceive as critical to their career (Mayrhofer et al., 2016). Considering that a career speaks for both current attainments and the direction of individuals' ongoing work journeys (Heslin & Turban, 2016), examining how religion drives individual careers is potentially fruitful not only for the time being but also for the future. Among the few studies that examine the influence of religion on career success are those by Afiouni and Karam (2014), Mayrhofer et al. (2021), and Sturges (2020). Afiouni and Charlotte particularly probed Muslim respondents, Sturges focused on Christianity, and only Mayrhofer et al. (2021) examined several religions within a study.

In order to reach greater clarity on this topic, our study follows Mayrhofer et al. (2021) by investigating religion's effects on career success from a multi-religion perspective. By doing so, this paper expands our knowledge of religion's role in determining an individual's career orientation by exploring how they perceive the importance of career success aspects. Such an objective is also in line with previous career studies' (e.g., Dries, 2011; Duffy, 2006) suggestion to bring religion into consideration, as religions are believed to influence individuals in career selection and assessment.

Similar to the study conducted by Mayrhofer et al. (2021), we also examine the relationship between religiosity, positive impact importance, and financial success importance in career success. Nevertheless, our study frames a different angle from Mayrhofer et al. (2021). While their study focuses on those career success aspects affected by demographic factors (e.g., age and gender) and macro-level variables (e.g., GDP), this study strongly emphasizes individual viewpoints. Our research places the importance of both positive impact and financial success into the correlational path model. Consequently, the present study's main objective is to investigate whether religious individuals have particular interests in creating positive impacts and achieving financial success. If they do, we want to see whether the urge to make positive impacts is related to their financial-success orientation.

In doing so, we contribute to the ethical discourse in a twofold way. Striving for financial success links to the ethical debates about consequences such as unethical conduct (Gino & Pierce, 2009) and lowered life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Cunningham et al., 2012). Likewise, striving for positive impact resonates with the debate about the relationship between religion and altruism (e.g., Bennett & Einolf, 2017; Borquist, 2021) and the potential downsides of the latter (Vansina, 2018).

This study was conducted in Indonesia for two main reasons. First, Indonesians generally recognize religion as a critical part of societal life (Crabtree, 2010). It is shown by the religious influences on Indonesian daily life, such as compulsory religious education since elementary school (Elihami, 2016) and the obligation to disclose one's religion on the national identity card (Dipa, 2019). Second and most importantly, Indonesia officially acknowledges and accommodates diverse religions.

Although Indonesians are predominantly Muslim, the country has a considerable number of adherents to other religions. In total, besides around 236 million Indonesians that are Muslims, Indonesia is also home to around 20 million Protestants, 8 million Catholics, 4 million Hindus, and 2 million Buddhists (Kusnandar, 2021). These conditions mark Indonesia as a good place to study the effects of religion on individual mindsets and behaviors.

Considering the globalization effect that fills the workplace with people of various religious backgrounds globally, our exploring religious individuals' career success patterns is both timely and essential. Finally, an effort to search for career success pattern of religious individuals is a step forward toward understanding how organizations can best manage their religious personnel through a career-success lens.

Literature review and hypotheses

Career success

Career success is a major topic in career studies (Ng et al., 2005). It is defined as the actual or perceived accumulated accomplishments resulting from work experiences (Judge et al., 1995). Following Hughes (1937), career success is generally separated into objective and subjective. Objective career success is discernible, quantifiable, and verifiable by other parties. Meanwhile, subjective career success is mainly based on individuals' experiences, and only they can verify whether they are having a successful career (Hughes, 1937, 1958). The initial discussion of career success mainly revolves around its objective and subjective dimensions (Ng et al., 2005).

On its development, following comprehensive research procedures involving individuals from various backgrounds (age, gender, nationality, occupation, religion), Mayrhofer et al. (2016) identified seven global dimensions of career success: financial security, financial success, entrepreneurship, positive work relationships, positive impact, learning and development, and work-life balance. These dimensions comprise the most comprehensive career success concept to date, covering both objective and subjective career success (Gubler et al., 2019).

The career success concept has vastly evolved from mainly focusing on salary, job promotion, and satisfaction, in the past, into a more complex multidimensional construct as proposed by contemporary career scholars (e.g., Briscoe et al., 2021; Mayrhofer et al., 2016). That conceptual development invites extant career scholars to investigate these career success dimensions more in-depth to be able to understand them better. For the present study, we will only focus on two dimensions: positive impact and financial success. We deliberately choose financial success rather than financial security out of career success dimensions, as the earlier variable is more compelling than the latter. To financially fulfill the bare minimum (financial security) should be an obligation for all individuals regardless of their religiosity degree. Nevertheless, whether religious individuals should aim for more (financial success) is subject to debate.

The nexus of financial success and positive impact perceived importance likely contains stimulating discourses as religion has a unique position in relation to positive impact and financial orientation. Religion and financial-oriented attitudes are often placed on opposite ends, where the earlier associates with helping others (Saroglou et al., 2005), and the latter tend to reduce one's willingness to help others, or in other words, reduce the creation of positive impacts (Tang, 2010). We also observe the somewhat high frequency of "wealth" and "making positive impacts" discussions on the religious scriptures, implying the significance of these two aspects in the life of religious individuals.

While this study refers to the Dual Aspect Importance & Achievement Career Success Scale (DAIA-CSS) from Briscoe et al. (2021), we only measure the importance of two selected career success aspects, not the achievement. Many irrepressible factors could influence career success achievements, making examining religiosity's effects on career success achievement extremely difficult. Meanwhile, the perceived importance of career success aspects lies within individuals' minds. In line with previous studies (e.g., Vitell et al., 2006), we only test how religiosity impacts individuals' mindsets and attitudes.

Within the career-success frame, positive impact can be displayed in proximal effects like assisting others directly related to one's career (e.g., clients, workmates) and distal results like leaving career legacies (Mayrhofer et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there might be broader and more vivid ways to define the positive impact from one's career when more variables—like religion—are considered. For instance, studies record that giving time (volunteering) and money (donating) are the common ways for religious people to create positive impacts (Andreoni et al., 2016; Hu, 2014). When individuals allow religion to influence their careers, positive impacts defining career success might also be translated into having a career that allows them some spare time to volunteer or gives them enough money to donate.

Concerning religion, financial resources are in a complicated position where on one side, it could be used to enhance one's religiosity. On the other, it could generate major adverse effects. As Tang (2010) puts it, money is neutral and is best defined as both a tool and a drug. The following sections will further elaborate on this matter.

Religiosity and positive impact

Through Al-Qur'an and the hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) as the sources of Islamic teaching (Linando, 2022), Islam teaches that "the noblest of all creatures are those who believe and do deeds of righteousness" (Qur'an, 98:7). Such teaching is also found in other religions, where Hinduism teaches "Do your work with the welfare of others in mind" (Bhagavadgita 3.19–26). Buddhism mentions "generosity, righteous conduct, offering help to relatives and blameless actions. These are the highest blessings" (Mangalasuttam). Buddhism also teaches the "Brahmavihara" (literally the abode of Brahma) concept, which explains the four states of infinite Buddhist minds. The states consist of *metta* (loving-kindness or benevolence), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (empathetic joy)*, and upekkha* (equanimity).

These teaching elements point to the necessity of creating positive impacts for all Buddhists.

Finally, through these Bible verses, Protestantism enjoins similar notions: "and let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9); "do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews, 13:16). In addition, particularly for Catholicism, papal teachings urge the believers to give priority to making positive impacts. Among the Pope's teachings: "In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan." (Pope Francis, 2020).

Strengthening these conceptual argumentations, researchers have empirically found that religious individuals tend to create positive impacts. Studies (e.g., Lambarraa & Riener, 2015) suggest that Islamic religiosity is related to actions that generate positive effects, such as donations. Other studies (e.g., Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008; Ekström, 2018) reveal that Christian teaching is also related to positive actions like donations and volunteering in social programs. The same pattern was observed in Hinduism and Buddhism (e.g., Chang, 2006; Pholphirul, 2015), where believers are shown as aspiring for positive impact creation. Thus for our first hypothesis, we propose the following:

H1: Religiosity positively influences the perceived importance of generating positive impacts from one's career.

Religiosity and financial success

The matters are somewhat more complicated in the relationship between religion and financial resources. Keeping in mind the split stances on whether religiosity goes along with financial orientation, we tend to support the side that believes religiosity influences individuals to aim for financial resource ownership. We have at least four reasons to back our stance. First, empirical findings suggest that religious individuals from all major religions show an affirmative tendency toward financial resource ownership. Scholars (Herteliu et al., 2019; Osei-Tutu et al., 2018) found that Protestant and Catholic religiosity is associated with a materialistic orientation. Similarly, other studies (Ali, 1988; Jain & Joy, 1997; Parboteeah et al., 2009) confirm that Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist religiosity are associated with the aspiration to earn financial resources.

Second, conceptually, all major religions give a "green-light" toward wealth-gaining activities. As can be seen in the four types of happiness described by Buddha (Anana Sutta 4.62), all but one shows a materialist orientation. The four types of happiness are *atthi-sukha* (the happiness of earning financial resources by just and righteous means); *bhoga-sukha* (the happiness of using financial resources liberally on family, friends, and on meritorious deeds); *anaṇa-sukha* (the happiness of being free from debts); *anavajja-sukha* (the happiness of blamelessness, living a faultless and pure life without committing evil in thought, word or deed). Although these happiness types do not overtly mention that a Buddhist must be wealthy, they signal that financial ownership is among the concerns of Buddhist teaching.

Hinduism has a similar viewpoint with four *Purusharthas* (goals of all mankind), one of which is *artha* (wealth). The Bible also mentions: "When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus." (Matthew, 27:57); "Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all." (I Chronicles, 29:12); indicating to be rich and to be the man of God are not mutually exclusive. In addition, the Pope also indicates that to be rich is not something condemned by Catholic tradition through this statement: "Riches 'are for the common good, for all,' and if the Lord grants them to someone, it is 'for the good of all.'" (Pope Francis, 2015a).

Finally, Islamic teaching mentions "Once the prayer is over, disperse throughout the land and seek the bounty of Allah. And remember Allah often so you may be successful." (Qur'an, 62:10). It is also known that financial resource is one of the essential elements for Muslims to be able to entirely perform religious commands such as *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and *Aqiqah* (the Islamic tradition to sacrifice animals on the occasion of a child's birth), which also require financial resources.

Third, financial success is among the default career orientation elements. The respondents are those having a career, and their religiosity should be contextualized accordingly. Like typical individuals with careers, we expect religious workers to also aim for financial wealth. Their perception of financial orientation probably differs from religious individuals who devote their lives only to religion (e.g., monks, nuns) where religious institutions guarantee the necessities of these individuals.

For individuals with careers, financial success is among the most common career-success definitions worldwide (Mayrhofer et al., 2016). This aspect of career success consistently appears on the career success model across decades, from the 1970s (e.g., Schein, 1978), the 1980s (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986), the 1990s (e.g., Parker & Chusmir, 1992; Sturges, 1999), the 2000s (Dries et al., 2008; Dyke & Murphy, 2006), the 2010s (Koekemoer et al., 2019; Mayrhofer et al., 2016), and into the 2020s (Bagdadli et al., 2021; Briscoe et al., 2021).

While we cannot entirely claim that all individuals rate financial success as an essential element of their career, our previous arguments advocate religion's influence in making individuals perceive financial success as important. Religious individuals tend to see wealth as a tool rather than an end, echoing the philosophical ground that aiming for wealth is an act of being grateful for God's abundance, not as greed, competing for scarce resources (Lurie, 2013). Likewise, Weber (2005—initially published in 1905) argues that the underlying moral objection is not on the financial resource ownership per se but rather on the idleness in the safety and enjoyment of possession. He also emphasizes that aiming for financial resource ownership for religious individuals is a part of stewardship on behalf of God. When such an orientation is intended for God, it is "not only morally permissible, but actually enjoined." (Weber, 2005, p. 108).

Fourth, as we live in the globalized era that opens the gate for inter-religion competitions (Spickard, 2004), there is an incentive for each religion to foreground its pro-prosperity face to attract congregators, now more than ever. Therefore, studies focusing on the way five religions in focus realigning their stance on financial resources in the wake of globalization emerge (e.g., Chow, 2002; Elshurafa, 2012;

McCann, 1997; Obadia, 2011; Saha, 2007). We are aware that we have only presented one side of a very complicated issue so far. The other side concerning how religions provide the manual of using money—as a tool, and the dangers of misusing money will be covered in the next section. For now, we shall postulate our hypothesis 2:

Positive impact and financial success

As the previous section addressed the complex positioning of financial wealth in religious perspectives, here we propose Hypotheses 3 and 4 to bridge the missing logic between religion and materialistic orientation. Referring to concepts mentioned in the holy books, the contrary viewpoints on the relationship between religiosity and materialistic orientation are understandable. While in some parts, religious teachings at least tolerate religious followers' aiming for financial wealth (e.g., Qur'an, 62:10; I Chronicles, 29:12; Anana Sutta 4.62; Purusharthas), in other parts, religion "warns" its followers to beware of the deceits wealth can produce. For instance, Al-Qur'an mentions, "O believers! Do not let your wealth or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah." (Qur'an, 63:9). Or as one of many Biblical examples: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (I Timothy, 6:10). Strengthened by the Pope's wisdom "You cannot serve two masters. Jesus does not place God in opposition to the devil, but God against wealth, because the opposite of serving God is serving wealth, working for wealth, to have more of it, to be secure" (Pope Francis, 2015b).

Similarly, Gautama Buddha mentions, "It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power." Hinduism teaches its followers, "Bhakti is destroyed by the following six kinds of faults: (1) eating too much or collecting more than necessary…" (Sri Upadesamrta).

The religions, therefore, have teachings that lead in both directions, one cautiously approving or at least tolerating the acquisition of financial resources and the other labeling it as a source of spiritual danger. Religious scriptures and teachings further elaborate the notion of tolerating financial resource acquisition, mentioning that financial resources help religious people to create more benefits for their surroundings. Where Hinduism teaches "It hath been said in the oldest Upanishad that a grihastha, acquiring wealth by honest means, should perform sacrifices; he should always give something in charity, should perform the rites of hospitality unto all arriving at his abode, and should never use anything without giving a portion thereof to others." (Adi Parva, Mahabharata chapter 91). Buddhism instills five skillful ways of using one's financial resources to bring immense benefit to the giver, consisting of: *(1) To make himself, the family, servants and workers happy; (2) To make friends and colleagues happy; (3) To protect himself against losses from such things as fire, water, kings, bandits, or unloved heirs; (4) To make five spirit-offerings: to relatives, guests, ancestors, king, and deities; (5) To establish an uplifting religious donation for ascetics and brahmins.* (Adiya sutta 5.41).

Abrahamic religions share similar teachings, as when the Bible says: "from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48); "your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness." (Corinthians, 8:14). Support for this approach is in Divini Redemptoris 44 for the Catholics: "The rich should not place their happiness in things of earth nor spend their best efforts in the acquisition of them. Rather, considering themselves only as stewards of their earthly goods, let them be mindful of the account they must render of them to their Lord and Master…" Lastly, Allah communicates to Muslims through Al-Qur'an: "O believers! Donate from the best of what you have earned and of what We have produced for you from the earth. Do not pick out worthless things for donation, which you yourselves would only accept with closed eyes." (Qur'an, 2:267).

Further, the spirit of 'with great wealth comes great responsibility' instilled in the scriptures is in fact also apparent in religious teachings and practices. Abrahamic religions realize this concept formally through *Zakat* in Islam (Ali & Hatta, 2014) and *Tithe* within Christian denominations.[1] On the other hand, though Buddhism does not institutionally regulate religious giving for those possessing wealth, religious giving is strongly encouraged as it might help the giver build up good karma and consequently reach enlightenment, as the main aim for Buddhists (Mosler, 2011). Likewise, Hinduism highly advocates for its believers to perform *Dana* (literally donation) as an essential part of Dharma (religious duty in Hinduism) (Eck, 2013).

Given that financial resources act as the potential tool to further produce positive impacts, we hypothesize that religious individuals who highly value the importance of generating positive impacts from their careers will also aim for financial success. That is one of the manifestations of religious individuals perfecting their religious practices.

H3: The perceived importance of positive impact resulted from one's career positively influences the perceived importance of financial success in one's career

These warnings about possible bad influences of financial wealth and the guidance on how one should use it to stay on the religious track give the impression that there is a tacit understanding that religious individuals can aim for financial wealth, yet they have to use it for greater goods, not only for their own self-fulfillment. The positioning of positive impact as the mediator on the model might further illuminate the career success pattern of religious individuals. Our overall model suggests that the career success aspiration of religious people is to aim for financial success in order to be able to produce more positive impacts. The more religious people aspire to positive impacts in their careers, the more they sense that financial success is important.

[1] There are various interpretations of whether *Tithe* is compulsory for Christians, for a more detailed discourse on this matter, see, for example: Davis (1987); Quiggle (2009).

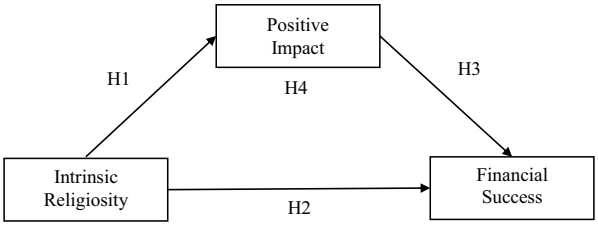

Fig. 1 Theoretical model

Supposedly, the finding suggests that positive impact fully mediates the relationship between intrinsic religiosity and financial success, then the career success pattern of religious individuals is *'to be rich but not for me'*. Meaning that the sole reason religious individuals aim for financial success is to create positive impacts. If the findings reveal that positive impact partially mediates the relationship, then the career success pattern of religious individuals is "to be rich but not only for me." Some, not all, of the religious individuals' financial resources are going to be used to further enhance the positive impacts resulted from their careers (Fig. 1).

H4: The perceived importance of positive impact resulted from one's career mediates the relationship between religiosity and the perceived importance of financial success in one's career

Methods

Participants and procedure

The data for this study were gathered through online questionnaires. Besides spreading the questionnaires to the authors' own circle, the authors also asked for the help of around 25 colleagues residing in many cities in Indonesia to spread the questionnaire. That is to ensure the diversity of the samples. The respondents are Indonesians who have a career, i.e., those having work experiences, as a "career" means the sequence of individual work experiences over time (Arthur et al., 1989). Following Brislin's (1970) suggestion, before the questionnaires were circulated, the items were translated from English to Indonesian by one of the authors who understood both languages well and then back-translated by a professional language institution. The back-translation version corresponded with the original version.

In general, the data reflects the actual Indonesian population, such as the majority of the respondents are Muslims and living on Java island. Nevertheless, the authors did not design the present study's samples to precisely reflect the actual percentage of population composition by religion. If the samples strictly adhere to the actual percentages, there should be only fewer than 10 Hindus and 10 Buddhists out of 985 respondents. Such strict arrangements will hinder statistical processing and consequently restrict the portrayal of comparison among religions.

With regards to the financial condition, the respondents' mean income is 5.95 million Rupiah per month (approximately 371 Euros with 1 Euro equals 16,000 Rupiah), slightly above the actual monthly income of around 4.58 million Rupiah (around 286 Euro), in 2021 (Lidwina, 2021). This data indicates that, on average, the respondents are fairly representative for financial success studies.

After collecting the data, we excluded respondents that did not fit this study's aim. Among the removed respondents were atheists, respondents with no work experience, Confucianism respondents (as the overall sample number was too small), the suspected outlier, and careless respondents, as checked through various mechanisms following Niessen et al.'s (2016) suggestion. The final data accounted for 985 respondents that comprised a wide range of demographic backgrounds (e.g., working location, religious affiliation, working sector, employment type), as summarized in Table 1.

Variables

All substantive variables were assessed using a 6-point Likert scale. Option 1 equals "strongly disagree" for religiosity items and "very unimportant" for the importance of career success items. Conversely, option 6 refers to "strongly agree" for religiosity items and 'very important" for career success importance items.

Religiosity

We employed Allport and Ross's (1967) Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) to measure religiosity. The ROS consists of three dimensions: intrinsic, extrinsic-personal, and extrinsic-social religiosity. However, following previous studies (e.g., Arli & Tjiptono, 2014), we only tested for intrinsic religiosity (IR) because the intrinsic dimension is perceived as the only dimension that truly measures religiousness. This point is backed by Donahue's (1985) assertion that the extrinsic constructs of religiosity do not measure religiousness but merely measure individuals' attitudes toward religion as a source of comfort and social support. Intrinsic religiosity consists of eight items, including "I enjoy reading about religion" and "My whole approach to life is based on my religion."

Career success

We assessed two dimensions of career success: the importance of financial success (FS) and of positive impact (PI). This study used the Dual Aspect Importance & Achievement Career Success Scale (DAIA-CSS) (Briscoe et al., 2021) to measure career success. The scale consists of three items for each dimension. The sample items are "Achieving wealth" for the financial success dimension and "Helping others" for positive impact. The opening question was, "Thinking about my career success, I consider this career aspect…".

Table 1 Respondents' demographic data

Variables	Number	Percent
Education		
Elementary school	2	.20%
High school	252	25.58%
Diploma	63	6.40%
Bachelor	456	46.29%
Master	177	17.97%
Doctoral	35	3.55%
Religion		
Islam	696	70.66%
Protestant	83	8.43%
Catholic	55	5.58%
Hindu	85	8.63%
Buddhist	66	6.70%
Work tenure		
1–5	594	60.30%
6–10	152	15.43%
11–20	118	11.98%
> 20	121	12.28%
Marital Status		
Single	524	53.20%
Married	436	44.26%
Divorced	25	2.54%
Employment status		
Entrepreneurship	105	10.66%
Work full-time	624	63.35%
Work part-time	73	7.41%
Freelance	70	7.11%
Currently not working	113	11.47%
Gender		
Male	405	41.12%
Female	580	58.88%
Age		
≤ 23	277	28.12%
24–39	512	51.98%
40–55	151	15.33%
56–74	45	4.57%
Professional group		
Manager	122	12.39%
Professional	427	43.35%
Clerical	91	9.24%
Skilled labor	178	18.07%
Manual labor	54	5.48%
Currently not working	113	11.47%

Table 1 (continued)

Variables	Number	Percent
Working location		
Java	654	66.40%
Sumatera	61	6.19%
Sulawesi	18	1.83%
Kalimantan	57	5.79%
Bali and Nusa Tenggara	58	5.89%
Maluku and Papua	12	1.22%
Diaspora	9	.91%
Currently not working	113	11.47%
Online-based	3	.30%

Total sample size is 985 respondents

Control variables

Following Tharenou's (1997) thesis on factors that influence career success, this study controlled for demographic (gender, age, and marital status) and human capital variables (education, work experience). We also included additional variables that potentially influence an individual's perception of positive impact and financial success importance: care responsibility (McLoyd, 2011), professional group (Bhattacharya & Marshall, 2012), work location (Pocock & Clarke, 2005), partner's employment status (Falkenberg & Monachello, 1990), and current monthly income (Dalton et al., 2016). We measured care responsibility by asking the respondents to filled in an ordinal scale from 0 to 10 of whether they are responsible of caring for other individuals (e.g., family members, parents, children). Zero represents no care responsibilities at all, and 10 indicate many responsibilities. In addition, as one of the aims of this study is to examine the impact of religiosity on career success perception regardless of respondents' religious affiliation, we also included religion as a control variable.

We correlated the above-mentioned potential control variables to the dependent variables and found that the significant control variables for this study are religion ($p < 0.001$ to financial success and $p = 0.002$ to positive impact), professional group ($p = 0.038$ to positive impact), care responsibility ($p = 0.001$ to financial success), marital status ($p = 0.08$ to positive impact), age ($p < 0.001$ to financial success), work location ($p = 0.03$ to financial success and $p = 0.012$ to positive impact), education ($p = 0.039$ to financial success and $p = 0.014$ to positive impact), and tenure ($p = 0.035$ to positive impact).

Data analysis

Preliminary analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 24 to test the constructs' validity. Three items from the intrinsic religiosity (IR) scale and one item from the positive impact (PI) scale did not meet the specified factor loading of at least 0.5 (Hair et al., 2013; Hulland, 1999), with two loadings slightly below 0.46 and two others slightly below 0.3, hence these items were dropped. In addition, two error terms within the same constructs (IR_5 and IR_7 error terms) were correlated to increase the model fit and the average of variance extracted (AVE) values (Hair et al., 2013). Table 2 shows the final usable items with all factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and AVE values confirming sufficient convergent validity of the constructs being tested in this study. To ensure the deletion will not affect the substantial testing result, we ran the mediation testing where all items were kept (no item deletions at all) and no item deletion was made on the PI construct as some scholars (Cook et al., 1981; Hair et al., 2013) suggested that a construct should have at least three items. The additional scenarios conveyed the same substantial results as the deletion scenario. In the end, we stuck with the deletion scenario as it gave the best model fit.

In Table 3, the discriminant validity assessment, the square roots of AVE for all variables are greater than inter-constructs correlation values, making this study fulfill discriminant validity criteria. Lastly, we checked for the model's goodness of fit. The present research model showed good fit indices (e.g., RMSEA 0.05, SRMR 0.03, CFI 0.96, and CMIN/DF 4.42). The correlations between constructs also show the expected results that IR, PI, and FS were positively correlated. Table 4 summarizes these results.

Common method bias

As all the data used in this study were gathered from a cross-sectional survey and were self-reported by the respondents, there is a possibility that the data were affected by common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, we ran a post hoc test to see the variables' correlation with and without the unmeasured latent method construct (ULMC; (L. J. Williams et al., 1989). The results suggest that the two conditions deliver almost identical results for all standardized path coefficients (with only 0.01 difference at most), suggesting that common method bias should not affect the empirical findings. Moreover, we collected the data anonymously and separated independent and dependent variable questions from other variables unrelated to this research. The separation is possible as this study belongs to a larger project involving other constructs not used in our research. Such a procedure is fruitful in minimizing the impact of potential common-method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 2 Measurement model, validity, and reliability results

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	α	CR	AVE
Financial success	Achieving wealth	.80	.79	.8	.57
	Receiving incentives, perks or bonuses	.59			
	Steadily making more money	.85			
Positive impact	Contributing to the development of others	.54	.65	.71	.57
	Helping others	.91			
Religiosity (intrinsic)	I enjoy reading about religion	.62	.83	.84	.52
	It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer	.78			
	I have often had a strong sense of God's presence	.73			
	I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs	.79			
	My whole approach to life is based on my religion	.68			

Total sample size is 985 respondents

Table 3 Discriminant validity

Constructs	MSV	MaxR(H)	IR	PI	FS
IR	.24	.85	**.71**		
PI	.24	.85	.49***	**.75**	
FS	.03	.83	.09***	.19***	**.76**

The diagonal (bold) line is the square root of the AVE of each construct. Asterisks (***) mean the correlation value between constructs is smaller than the square root of the AVE of each construct. *FS* financial success, *PI* positive impact, *IR* intrinsic religiosity, *MSV* maximum shared variance, *MaxR(H)* maximum reliability. Total sample size is 985 respondents

Table 4 Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
IR	5.15	.85	-		
PI	5.16	.87	.37**	-	
FS	4.75	.94	.06*	.13**	-

FS financial success, *PI* positive impact, *IR* intrinsic religiosity; asterisks (**) mean the correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); asterisk (*) means the correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). Total sample size is 985 respondents

Results

We employed a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure and explored the 95% confidence intervals using 5000 bootstrapping samples. The switching technique from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for CFA, model fit, and common method bias tests to Ordinary Least Square (OLS) for hypothesis testing is not uncommon. Pertinent prior research (e.g., (Arli et al., 2021) has reported such variations.

First, we tested intrinsic religiosity influence toward positive impact as the potential mediating variable (H1), where the effect size was medium and significant ($\beta = 0.376$, $p < 0.001$). Second, the path from intrinsic religiosity to financial success (H2) was, albeit relatively small, also positively significant ($\beta = 0.065$, $p = 0.042$). Lastly, we checked for the potential mediating variable's influence toward the dependent variable (H3) where the effect size between positive impact and financial success was significant and slightly bigger than H2 but smaller compared to H1 ($\beta = 0.132$, $p < 0.001$). From these results, H1, H2, and H3 were all supported. The test results confirm that religiosity positively influences positive impact (H1), religiosity positively impacts financial success (H2), and positive impact positively influences financial success (H3).

Then, we used the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) with the bootstrap procedure (5000 re-samples) to conduct mediation testing (H4). The mediation testing suggests that intrinsic religiosity predicts positive impact importance, which in turn predicts financial success importance. The standardized indirect effect (β) is equal to 0.04, and the correlation is significant as the effect does not hold zero values between

Table 5 Mediation testing results

Variables			Estimate	S.E	Lower CI	Upper CI	*p*
Predictor	Mediator	Predicted					
IR	-	PI	.30	.32	.23	.36	***
PI	-	FS	.15	.03	.09	.22	***
IR	-	FS	.08	.03	.01	.15	.017
IR	PI	FS	.04	.01	.02	.07	
Religion		PI	.25	.06	.12	.39	***
ProGroup		PI	.09	.09	− .08	.26	.318
Marital		PI	.00	.07	− .14	.15	.911
WorkLoc		PI	− .01	.06	− .14	.10	.780
Education		PI	.24	.07	.10	.38	.008
Tenure		PI	.01	.00	− .00	.02	.086
Religion		FS	− .04	.07	− .18	.10	.578
CareResp		FS	.03	.01	.00	.05	.005
Age		FS	− .02	.00	− .03	− .01	.003
WorkLoc		FS	− .01	.06	− .14	.11	.787
Education		FS	.05	.07	− .08	.20	.434

$N = 985$; the estimate is standardized; bias-corrected CI, 95%; bootstrapping samples, 5000; *IR* intrinsic religiosity, *PI* positive impact, *FS* financial success, *WorkLoc* work location, *ProGroup* professional group, *CareResp* care responsibility; ***$p < .001$

Dummy variables: religion, 1 is Islam, 0 is others; ProGroup, 1 is manager, 0 is others; marital, 1 is married, 0 is others; WorkLoc, 1 is Java, 0 is others; education, 1 is university (diploma, bachelor, master, doctor), 0 is school (elementary and high school)

the lower and the upper confidence intervals, hence supporting H4. Within the mediation model, only religion and education remain significant control variables for PI, while only care responsibility and age remain significant for FS. Table 5 summarizes the overall mediation testing results. Finally, all hypotheses in the present study were supported.

We also ran a subsequent exploratory analysis to check whether the proposed career success pattern applied to all religious groups. Simple linear regressions for the included variables on each religion were conducted with SPSS 26 software. Putting the *p*-value aside, as the sample sizes of other religions besides Islam are relatively small, inter-variable coefficient ranges for each religion may reveal interesting notions. Table 6 summarizes the multi-religion analysis, which is further illustrated in Fig. 2 so that the readers could easily see how religiosity interacts with financial success and positive impact importance on each religion. We will return to them in the discussion section below.

Table 6 Multi-religion analysis

		Coefficient	*p*-value	LLCI	ULCI
IR to PI	Islam	.31	< .001	.24	.38
	Protestant	.03	.757	− .18	.25
	Catholic	.27	.040	.01	.54
	Hindu	.45	< .001	.25	.64
	Buddha	.03	.797	− .21	.28
PI to FS	Islam	.15	< .001	.08	.23
	Protestant	.20	.064	− .01	.42
	Catholic	.15	.252	− .11	.42
	Hindu	.08	.465	− .13	.29
	Buddha	− .12	.319	− .37	.12
IR to FS	Islam	− .00	.904	− .07	.07
	Protestant	.15	.163	− .06	.37
	Catholic	− .03	.812	− .30	.24
	Hindu	.17	.118	− .04	.38
	Buddha	.13	.273	− .11	.38

N-Islam, 696; N-Protestant, 83; N-Catholic, 55; N-Hindu, 85; N-Buddha, 66; *IR* intrinsic religiosity, *PI* positive impact, *FS* financial success; confidence interval, 95%

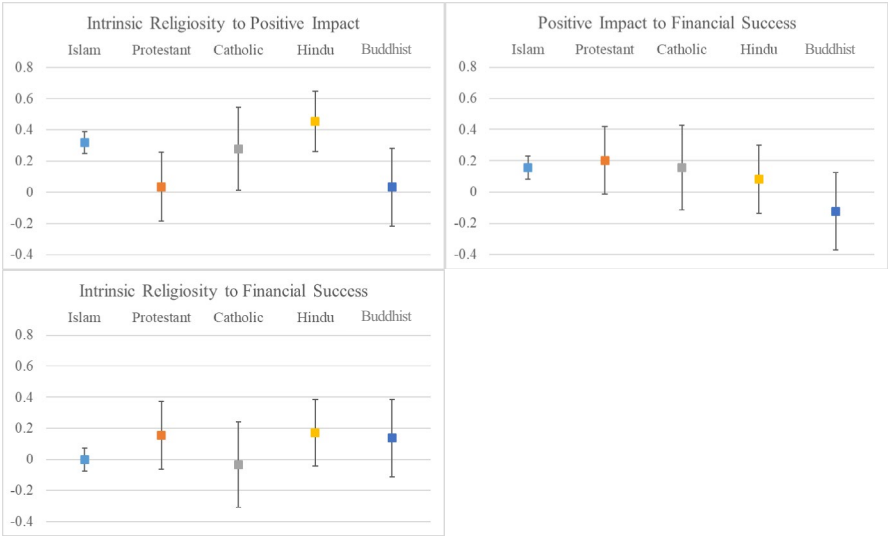

Fig. 2 Multi-religion coefficient ranges

Discussion

The results reveal that, collectively, religious individuals have a "to be rich but not only for me" pattern as their career-success orientation. The pattern suggests that

the aim for financial success among religious individuals is partially driven by their aspiration to generate positive impacts from their careers. The finding portrays how religiosity as the indication of religious teachings adherence regulates the way religious individuals perceive financial resources ownership and how they should use it. This point aligns with Schein's (1978) notion that individual values will drive their career. Another interpretation from the test result is that religious individuals are keen to create positive impacts through financial means but not at their own expense. This interpretation is drawn from the partial mediation instead of the full mediation result. Partial mediation indicates that the mediating role of positive impact is not the only factor explaining religious individuals' mindset to perceive financial success as an important career success element.

The finding on hypothesis 1 suggests that religiosity positively influences the perceived importance of positive impact. This result complements the understanding of religiosity connection and behaviors intended to benefit others. The same goes for the hypothesis 2 result: religiosity positively influences financial success's perceived importance. This result enriches our knowledge of the link between religiosity and financial orientation. This study confirms that collectively religiosity positively and significantly relates to financial success importance within the career-success frame. The results affirm that, like other workers in general, religious individuals also aspire to be rich.

Our findings on the relationship between the perceived importance of positive impact and financial success were consistent with our hypotheses (H3 and H4). Overall, the results portray that religious individuals will aim to be financially successful so that they can produce a greater degree of positive impact from their careers. Nevertheless, since the additional explorative analysis shows that the tested model results vary among religions, we cannot derive full benefit from our data by only looking at the collective religiosity results.

The exploratory results also shed light on several fronts. First, that all religions inspire the believers to create positive impacts in their careers. This is shown by the positive coefficients from intrinsic religiosity to positive impact importance for all religions. This finding is in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), where the evaluation of positive impact perceived importance as an attitude is determined by the belief, as being represented by religiosity degree. The positive relationship between religiosity and positive impact importance suggests that religion is among the driving factors influencing perceived positive impact importance resulted from one's career.

Second, the correlation between religiosity and the perceived importance of positive impact for the Protestants and the Buddhists is close to zero. A likely explanation is that the Protestants tend to rationalize economic values in all activities, leading them only to prioritize those activities that bring economic gain (Arslan, 2001). This conception might contradict the nature of creating positive impacts, which is all about giving (Boothby & Bohns, 2021) rather than earning. As for Buddhism, Williams (2002) argues that Buddhism's core teaching is concerned with personal experiences, which therefore promotes egoism rather than caring about others. While these arguments might explain the findings of

Protestants' and Buddhists' career orientation, we persist that more theoretical examinations and empirical studies are needed to clarify these findings further.

To comprehend the relationship between religiosity and financial success, we follow Setta and Shemie's (2015) suggestion to categorize the observed religions into two main groups. The religious groups are the Western or Abrahamic, including Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam; and the Eastern, which includes Hinduism and Buddhism. Abrahamic religions depend on theistic revelations. Meanwhile, Eastern religions are more like a philosophy to obtain wisdom that realizes the nature of the world and oneself. Consequently, Eastern religions tend to have a more pragmatic approach toward wealth ownership, prosperity, and capitalism, compared to Abrahamic religions (Loy, 2003). The results depict this conception, where Hindu and Buddhist religiosity positively relates to financial success.

It is interesting to note that there is a similar pattern on the relationship between religiosity and financial success among Abrahamic religions, except for Protestantism. For Islam and Catholicism, the coefficient of religiosity and financial success that is slightly negative and close to 0 portrays the possibility that the relationship between the two variables might be marked positively or negatively in different circumstances. As explained in the literature review section, these marks express the complicated positioning of material ownership through Islamic and Catholic lenses, as if financial wealth is a double-edged sword.

This observation explains the diverse and conflicting findings on Muslims' and Catholics' stances concerning financial wealth. While some studies conclude that these two groups favor financial resources ownership (e.g., Abdallah et al., 2017; Parboteeah et al., 2009), others state that affiliation with these two groups negatively correlates to financial resources ownership (e.g., Ilter et al., 2017; Keister, 2003).

The Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) is a possible explanation for Protestantism's religiosity and financial success result. The PWE is a term coined in 1905 by Max Weber (2005), arguing that Protestant ethics and values are closely tied to capitalism, which means the Protestants should strive for financial wealth ownership. The foremost theologian supporting PWE is John Calvin, who sees business success as a sign of God's favor and consequently praises financial wealth and condemns poverty (Light, 2010). Indonesian Protestantism today is heavily influenced by Calvinism owing to the legacy of the Dutch missionaries during the colonial era (Hoon, 2013). This finding also confirms Larsen et al.'s (1999) corollary that Protestants are inclined to be more materialistic than their counterpart Catholics due to different stances on capitalism.

On a broader scope, our findings might also evoke an ethical notion. Some scholars (e.g., Spilka, 1977; Vitell et al., 2006) still find that individuals' religiosity stands at the opposite end of materialistic orientation. One could ponder whether there should be a campaign to buzz the thought of accepting—or even promoting—religious individuals to be wealthy. That is because a doctrine of dissociating religiosity and financial ownership is suspected to be a partial contributor to the larger societal destitution (Crabtree, 2010; Sedmak, 2019). Since going deep into that matter is beyond the scope of this study, we will elaborate on our thought concerning ethical aspects that link to our findings in the suggestion section instead.

Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes on two fronts: career success and religiosity discourses. The findings reveal that financial success as a classic indicator of objective career success relates to positive impact, another career success element. While this contribution is not entirely novel, our study empirically strengthens the argumentation of career scholars (e.g., Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005) that career success elements may correlate one to another. By that, our study further illuminates the interconnectedness of career success elements.

We also show that religion is a factor influencing individuals' perception of career success. Religiosity is demonstrated to be one of the factors influencing the perceived importance of creating positive impacts and achieving financial success from one's career. Thereby, the present study promotes a more holistic apprehension of the multifaceted nature of individuals' lives by empirically demonstrating the impact of religion on their career trajectories. In essence, the present study supports the existing paradigms within career scholarship and broadens them by scrutinizing the complex relations among career success dimensions and introducing a novel outlook on the role of religiosity in shaping professional orientation. This study's approach contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in the pursuit of career success.

The above-mentioned theoretical contributions lead to the following practical implications. First, considering the impact of religion on one's career, organizations should accommodate religious needs in the workplace. Align with Cash and Gray's (2000) assertion, religion is an essential factor organizations and managers should be ready to deal with, as accommodating religion in the workplace might benefit the employees and the organization. Second, career counsellors may want to consider religious aspects when giving career advice, mainly when the personnel is pious. Our findings demonstrate that pious individuals place religion as a primary factor driving their careers. Echoing Paul's (2008) suggestion, this calls for counsellors and psychologists to incorporate religious influences into career counselling. Moreover, a faith-driven career often comprises complex ambivalences and struggles that traditional career counselling cannot relieve (Hernandez et al., 2011).

Third, organizations must ensure that financial rewards are at reasonable levels, as even religious personnel favor financial success. It is often taken for granted that pious individuals do not aim for a materialistic living due to the view that worldliness substances are contrary to religious transcendence (Smith, 1991). Nevertheless, alongside many other studies (Luna-Arocas & Tang, 2004; Vitell et al., 2006), our findings showed that this assumption is not entirely true.

Fourth, organizations might want to initiate projects that positively impact their surroundings, as such activities are part of religious personnel's aspirations. In line with Héliot et al.'s (2020) proposition, an effort to promote impactful activities in the workplace (e.g., volunteer opportunities) indicates that the workplace espouses religious practices at work. Such an initiative might further enhance religious individuals' commitment and sense of belonging to the organization.

Lastly, as the exploratory result suggested, the believers from each religion may perceive financial success and positive impact importance differently. Companies with a large number of employees from particular religious' backgrounds might want to look more into career success patterns from each religion. For those having a mixed number of employees and not focusing on a particular religion only, the simplified pattern this study reveals may help accommodate religious employees' career success concerns.

Limitations and suggestions

While making the above-mentioned contributions to the extant literature, our study still entails limitations. First is our cross-sectional approach, which can only portray the phenomenon at a particular point of time. Future researchers are encouraged to examine how religious individuals perceive the importance of positive impact and financial success of their careers over time. A longitudinal approach could be fruitful as individuals' religiosity and its impact toward other variables develops over time (Linando et al., 2023), which might influence how religiosity affects career assessments.

Further, we suggest future studies testing career success's importance to beware of the potential Social Desirability Bias (SDB), as asking to which degree the respondents value some aspects of their career might be influenced by societal perception. Second, this study restrictedly measures career success from the perceived importance viewpoints. Future studies could examine the attainment aspect of career success, as the interplay of perceived importance and attainment might offer a totally different career success story of religious individuals. Such as but not limited to whether religious individuals still aspire to earn an ever-increasing financial wealth given that they have achieved much financially.

Third, while our exploratory analysis is helpful for giving a general portrayal of career success for individuals from various faiths, the analysis was limited on the sample size of all religions except Islam. Considering management scholars' remark about the complexities of religion (Khilji et al., 2014; Linando, 2023a), future researchers might want to replicate the model with a bigger sample size for each religion and see whether the conclusions are the same as this study.

Fourth, this study only takes respondents from Indonesia. We acknowledge Johnson and Grim's (2013) concern that religious, national, and social identities are often intertwined, making it difficult to establish boundaries. Career success perceptions of Indonesian Muslims might be different from those of Middle Eastern Muslims, or Indonesian Catholics might not have the same mentality as European Catholics, and so forth.

While laying claim that our findings might be beneficial to understand religious individuals' career success patterns in countries with similar characteristics as Indonesia (e.g., comprised of believers from various religious backgrounds), future studies are needed to shed light on the universality of religious individuals' career success patterns, as revealed by this study (for more detailed discussion on this matter, see, for example: Johns, 2017; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). In so doing, future studies

might also explore whether the majority-minority status of a particular religious group in a country affects individuals' career success perception as driven by religion. While majority-minority status has been believed as an essential factor impacting individuals' internal dynamics (Linando, 2023b), this status is often overlooked in the literature (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001).

Fifth, future studies might also want to incorporate other career success dimensions within religious individuals' context. Many, if not all, other career success dimensions are relatable to religious spirits. For instance, the notion of perceiving financial security as important aligns with the depiction of carrying out one's obligations. As written in the Bible: "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (I Timothy, 5:8). Also to further explore the conviction that religion might influence individuals' perception of work-life balance importance (Linando, 2021; Srivastava & Tang, 2021) and entrepreneurship activities (Audretsch et al., 2013).

Lastly, we would like to provoke future studies to elaborate on these ethical issues: (1) considering that religious individuals' behaviors are driven by religion, to what extent should religious leaders campaign the urge to aim toward financial success for the congregations? (2) Should they plainly demonstrate the "green light" of being wealthy from religious scriptures, or should they direct that all congregations must be wealthy? (3) In which societal contexts is an approach ("green-light" versus "a must") deemed more suitable than the other? (4) How should they prevent individuals from gathering wealth using the wrong means in the name of religion (like the tale of Robin Hood)? (5) Or whether they do not need to prevent it at all, as such an act maybe justified from religious viewpoints? (6) Perhaps future studies would like to design ethical wealth-earning (and ethical wealth-spending) models for religious individuals.

Conclusion

This paper provides empirical evidence that religiosity influences the importance of positive impact and the interplay of these two factors consequently influences the importance of financial success within career success frames. Our study contributes to the faith-work integration discourse by summing up the collective career-success pattern of religious individuals. Religious individuals aim to be rich, but the wealth is not used only to satisfy their personal desires; part of their wealth will be used to create positive impacts instead. Finally, this study lays the groundwork for future research into a more comprehensive examination of religion's role in career success discourses and the ethical concerns that possibly follow.

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Data availability The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Jaya Addin Linando, upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics approval All procedures involving human participants in this study were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent All individual participants included in the study were informed of their rights, contributions, the use of the data, and this study purposes, prior to filling out the questionnaire. All of them participated in this study consensually.

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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