



Institute for
the **Impact** of
Faith in Life

Making Faith Work: Job Satisfaction in the UK

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The Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life

The Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL) is a research forum that examines the role that faith and religious belief plays in the lives of people in the United Kingdom, at work, at home and in the community.

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Executive Summary

The Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL) commissioned a bespoke nationally-representative survey which focused on the relationship between faith and job satisfaction in the UK. Fieldwork was carried out by TechneUK (a member of the British Polling Council [BPC]) between the 29th September and 8th October 2023. A total of 2,004 UK adults were surveyed across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These are the key findings:

Key findings

- Among UK respondents who were either employed or self-employed at the time they took the survey, 57% said they had a strong sense of belonging in the sphere of working life. 28% said it was neither strong nor weak, while 15% said it was weak.
- Among UK respondents who are employed or self-employed, nearly two in three said they were trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (64%). While around one in five (21%) said they were neither trusting nor distrusting, 15% said they were distrusting of such colleagues and contacts.
- Among UK respondents who are employed (excluding self-employment), 44% felt positively about how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates their religious practices. While 46% were indifferent on the matter, 5% said they had negative views about their employer on this front.
- Among UK respondents who are either employed by an organisation or in self-employment, nearly two in three (64%) are satisfied with their job. While one in five (exactly 20%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 15% reported job dissatisfaction.
- Among UK respondents in general, four in five (80%) say that it is important to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner. 8% say it is unimportant.
- Among UK respondents in general, under a quarter (24%) believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead. The percentage of those who categorically do not believe this is nearly double that at 46%, with the remaining 30% saying they do not know or are not sure.

Employers accommodating for religious beliefs and practices

- Among employed UK respondents who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity, around three in four (73%) feel positively about how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates their religious practices. Only 3% feel negatively about their employer on this front, with 20% stating that they neither feel positively or negatively on this.
- Similarly, among employed UK respondents who say that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, around three in four (73%) feel positively about

how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates their religious practices. Only 2% feel negatively about their employer on this front, with 20% stating that they neither feel positively or negatively on this.

Trust in work colleagues and professional contacts

- Among employed and self-employed respondents who state that their religious background is important to their personal identity, more than three in four say they trust their work colleagues and professional contacts overall (77%), with 7% saying that they are distrusting of them.
- Among employed and self-employed respondents who state that their religious background is not important to their personal identity, 54% say they trust their work colleagues and professional contacts overall (with 23% saying that they are distrusting of them).
- Among employed and self-employed respondents who have a stated religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), nearly three in four say they are trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (74%), with 7% saying they were distrusting.
- Among employed and self-employed respondents who consider themselves to be atheists, less than half (49%) were trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts overall. Nearly three in ten were distrusting of such people in their work-related life (29%).
- Among employed and self-employed respondents who say that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, over three in four say they are trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (76%), with 8% being distrusting of them overall.
- Among employed and self-employed respondents who say that they do not believe in God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, 50% say they are trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts, with more than one in four (27%) being distrusting of them.

Religiosity and job satisfaction

- Among employed UK respondents who stated that their religious background is important to their personal identity, over three in four (77%) reported being satisfied with their job (with 9% being dissatisfied). For those who say their religious background is unimportant to their personal identity, the rate of job satisfaction is 56% - a drop of 21 percentage points. In this latter group, over one in five (22%) are dissatisfied with their job.
- Among employed UK respondents who have a stated religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), nearly three in four (73%) reported job satisfaction (with 9% being dissatisfied). Only half of atheist respondents reported

job satisfaction (50%), with over a quarter stating that they are dissatisfied with their job (27%).

- For employed UK respondents who say that they have a strong attachment to God/ Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, over three in four report job satisfaction (77%), with one in ten saying they are dissatisfied (10%). Among respondents who do not believe in divine or spiritual power/s, 52% report being satisfied with their job – with a quarter reporting job dissatisfaction (25%).

Religiosity and responsibility/duty

- Among UK respondents who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity, 87% say it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 4% saying it is unimportant). Among those who say their religious background is unimportant to their personal identity, 73% say it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 12% saying it is unimportant).
- Among UK respondents who say that they have a strong attachment to God/ Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, 89% say that it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 4% saying that it is unimportant). Among those who do not believe in the existence of a divine power or spiritual being (or beings), 70% say it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 14% saying it is unimportant).
- Among UK respondents who state a clear religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), 86% say it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 4% saying it is unimportant). Among atheist respondents, 69% say it is important to carry out everyday responsibilities and duties in a thorough manner (with 16% saying it is unimportant).

Religiosity and optimism over the future of the UK economy

- Among UK respondents who stated that their religious background is important to their personal identity, 35% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead. This drops to 17% for those who say that their religious background is unimportant to their personal identity. In the former group, 35% categorically do not believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead – rising to 57% for the latter group.
- Among UK respondents who say that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/ Higher Spiritual Being/s, 34% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead. This falls to 16% among those who do not believe in the existence of divine and spiritual power/s. In the former group, 35% categorically do not believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead – rising to 60% for the latter group.

- Among UK respondents who stated a clear religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), 31% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead. This drops to 16% among atheist respondents. In the former group, 36% categorically do not believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead – rising to 59% for atheist respondents.

The report makes the following concluding points:

- Religious belief and faith-based devotion can contribute towards positive psychological wellbeing and mental health – in turn positioning people to better cope with and manage the pressures and challenges that come with a competitive working life.
- Britain continues to be one of the leading industrialised forces in the world when it comes to providing religious freedoms and anti-discrimination protections – fostering an employment culture which is generally respectful and accommodating towards those of faith.
- How faith, spirituality and traditional folk practices relate to the inter-relationship between family stability, educational attainment, and socio-economic integration should be more deeply investigated in the UK (especially in higher-achieving communities of Indian, Nigerian, and Chinese heritage).



1. Introduction

The impact of faith and spirituality on various spheres of British life remains a relatively underdeveloped area of research, especially when compared with the United States, where religion – specifically Christianity – continues to be an integral part of national political discourse and wider public life.

However, significant forms of social and cultural transformation in the United Kingdom mean that this glaring lacuna in British scholarship should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The 2021 England and Wales census told a story of a society which is becoming both more secular and heterogeneous in a religious sense. The marked decline in Christianity is demonstrated by the fact that in the 2001 census, over seven in ten people (71.7%) identified as a Christian. In the space of just 20 years, this fell to less than half of residents across England and Wales identifying as Christian in the 2021 census – 46.2%, a drop of 25.5 percentage points.¹ During that same period, the proportion of the population identifying as Muslim has risen from 3% (1.5 million people) to 6.5% (3.9 million people). In 2021, for the first time in the history of the England and Wales census, the number of Hindus reached a million.²

The pace of social change in Britain – especially the rapid secularisation of the white-British mainstream (but also ethnic-minority groups such as "hyperintegrated" people of Black Caribbean heritage) alongside growing Muslim and Hindu populations – calls for more research which investigates the impact of faith in British life.

The inaugural report published by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life – ***Keep the Faith: Mental Health in the UK*** – found that when compared to atheists and non-believers, religious Britons fared notably better when it came to self-perceived psychological wellbeing and mental health.³ At the bivariate level, those who reported a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s were more likely to say they were happy as a person, had a high level of day-to-day self-control and felt confident over handling the challenges that come with life (compared to those who do not believe in divine/spiritual power/s).⁴ Compared to those of higher religiosity, those who said their religious background was unimportant to their personal identity and had little to no levels of religious-service attendance (bar "special" occasions such as marriages and funerals), were significantly less likely to self-report good psychological wellbeing, life satisfaction, and optimism over their personal future – even after controlling for socio-demographic variables such as age, sex, education, socio-economic status, and race in

1 Office for National Statistics (2022), 'Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021', 29 November.

Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021>, last accessed: 13 October 2023.

2 Ibid

3 Ehsan, R. (2023), 'Keep the Faith: Mental Health in the UK', Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL). Available at: <https://iifl.org.uk/reports/keep-the-faith-mental-health-in-the-uk/>, last accessed: 20th November 2023

4 Ibid.

an ordinal logistic regression model.⁵

This gives rise to important questions over the role of faith and spirituality in shaping mindsets and life outlooks, and how this potentially impacts on approaches to working life and rates of job satisfaction in the UK economy. Does religion provide a rich source of positivity, resilience and optimism which positions one well to cope with the pressures and challenges which inevitably come with operating in the UK's competitive market economy? Do religious and spiritual forms of membership help to cultivate forms of broad-based social trust which incorporate the workplace and professional contacts? In an increasingly volatile and unpredictable world, does faith and spirituality offer the foundations of appreciative life outlooks and grateful attitudes which contribute towards higher rates of job satisfaction? In an underperforming national economy which is currently characterised by stagnation and long-standing productivity issues, are religious Britons more optimistic over its future than their non-believing compatriots? These are the key relationships of interest that this report wishes to explore.

The report is structured as follows: after this introduction, a short literature review will be provided on the relationship between faith and work. This will be followed by data analysis – reliant on nationally representative polling conducted by British Polling Council member TechneUK - which explores the relationship between faith/spirituality and level of trust in work colleagues/professional contacts as well as general job satisfaction. How religious Britons feel about how their employer accommodates their religious beliefs and practices will also be explored. The report concludes with a comprehensive discussion of the results and how the positive power of faith and spirituality can be harnessed in British working life.



5 Ibid.

2. Faith and Work – An Under-Researched Relationship

The relationship between faith (and spirituality) and work-related outcomes such as trust in work colleagues/professional contacts and general job satisfaction is currently an underdeveloped area of research in the British context.

The IIFL's inaugural report, *Keep the Faith: Mental Health in the UK*, found that religious Britons were more likely to self-report good psychological wellbeing and positive mental health outcomes relating to resilience, self-control, and happiness. Higher levels of religiosity were also significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting life satisfaction – even after controlling for socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, race, education level and socio-economic status. On the back of this report's main findings, it is reasonable to suggest that faith can inspire a degree of positivity and determination that helps one to cope with the inevitable challenges and pressures that come with life – as well as being a source of optimism which encourages people to believe that better days lie ahead during times of adversity. This can go beyond what is called "egocentric" optimism (one's own future), into "sociotropic" evaluations which can include the degree to which one feels optimistic (or pessimistic) over the future of the wider national economy.

For workers – whether it is within an organisation which operates in a competitive sector or a form of self-employment that places considerable pressure on a sole independent contractor to generate their own business – a strong connection to the divine and religious forms of membership can be an integral source of strength and support. There is the possibility that faith-inspired stress-coping mechanisms can reduce the impact of work-related pressures and challenges – thereby protecting general levels of job satisfaction among religious workers.

While a scarcity in the UK, there are existing non-British studies which have investigated the relationship between faith and work-related outcomes such as general job satisfaction. Based on data drawn from 741 employees and managers belonging to organisations and firms in southern California, Ghazzawi et al. (2006) found that "religious commitment" positively impacts job satisfaction.⁶ Previous research suggests that there are extensive positive correlations between job and important workplace variables such as "organisational commitment" – which can include the degree to which employers are respectful of religious beliefs and accommodating of the religious practices of their own workers.⁷ It has been argued that an integral part of good management in diverse settings is fostering an inclusive workplace where "whole-person expression" is valued – which involves the accommodation of spirituality and the basic tenets of religious faiths.⁸ While there are other factors that shape

6 Ghazzawi, I., Smith, Y. and Cao, Y. (2016), 'Faith and Job Satisfaction: Is Religion a Missing Link?', *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 20(1): 1-29.

7 Ibid

8 Walker, A. G. (2013), 'The relationship between the integration of faith and work and life and job outcomes', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112: 453-461.

general job satisfaction (such as the nature of tasks, pay and benefits, individual personality traits and wider social influences), these forms of religious and spiritual accommodation in the workplace may be especially important factors when it comes to job satisfaction among workers of faith.

A potentially crucial dynamic within the relationship between faith and work is trust. Forms of religious participation – such as regularly attending services at a place of worship – can help to cultivate social capital (building trusted connections that can help to open and create work-related opportunities).⁹ In a 2015 study based on multilevel logistic regression models reliant on 2008 European Values Survey data, it was concluded that “integration into religious communities furthers trust.”¹⁰ While it has been argued that integration into one’s own religious community can strengthen “ingroup” trust at the expense of wider generalised social trust (based on the Granovetter theory of “network ties”),¹¹ others have argued that it can have the opposite effect by increasing one’s perception of trustworthiness of human beings overall (beyond group-specific identity).¹²

It is plausible that religious participation and belonging – such as regularly attending services at a fixed place of worship with a stable membership – can help to foster mindsets which allow one to trust others in general. This can influence one’s approach to working life, potentially enabling an individual to join and develop collaborative work-related networks and partnerships (which in turn reinforces broad-based social trust). There is also the possibility that some religious people live in a highly localised environment – resident in tightly-knit established communities with high rates of service attendance at a place of worship which work colleagues, co-sector workers and professional contacts may share. This increases the potential for cultivating friendships which cut across both one’s religious participation and working life – mutually reinforcing forms of social trust.

How faith is associated with work-related outcomes such as the level of trust in work colleagues/professional contacts and general job satisfaction will be explored in the forthcoming data analysis section. With the positive relationship between religiosity and optimism over one’s own future being established through the IIFL’s previous report, this one will build on those findings by investigating the potential association between faith and optimism over the future of the UK economy (a “sociotropic” evaluation as opposed to an “egocentric” one). It will also explore “conscientiousness” by looking at how levels of religiosity shape attitudes towards responsibility and duty – traditional values which can be considered integral in terms of having both a moral and productive approach to work (and life in general).

9 Putnam, R. (2000), *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, New York, Simon & Schuster.

10 Dingemans, E. and van Ingen, E. (2015), ‘Does Religion Breed Trust? A Cross-National Study of the Effects of Religious Involvement, Religious Faith, and Religious Context on Social Trust’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 54:4: 739-755.

11 Daniels, P. and Von der Ruhr, M. (2010), ‘Trust in others: Does religion matter?’, *Review of Social Economy*, 68(2): 163-186.

12 Welch, R., Sikkink, D., Sartain, E. and Bond, C. (2004), ‘Trust in God and trust in man: The ambivalent role of religion in shaping dimensions of social trust’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 43(3): 317-343.

3. Survey Methodology and Data Analysis

The IIFL commissioned a bespoke nationally representative survey of 2,004 adult respondents in the UK which was carried out by TechneUK (which is a member of the British Polling Council [BPC]). Covering all four home nations (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), the survey methodology was a mixture of online and phone interviews, with the fieldwork taking place between the 29th September and the 8th October 2023. The central purpose of commissioning the survey was to take a quantitative methodological approach to investigating the impact of faith/spirituality on work-related trust, perceptions of employer-related religious accommodation, and general job satisfaction. The bivariate-level analyses was processed in SPSS, with the ordinal logistic regression model (predicting for job satisfaction) being run through STATA.

Figure 1: “How important is it to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner?”

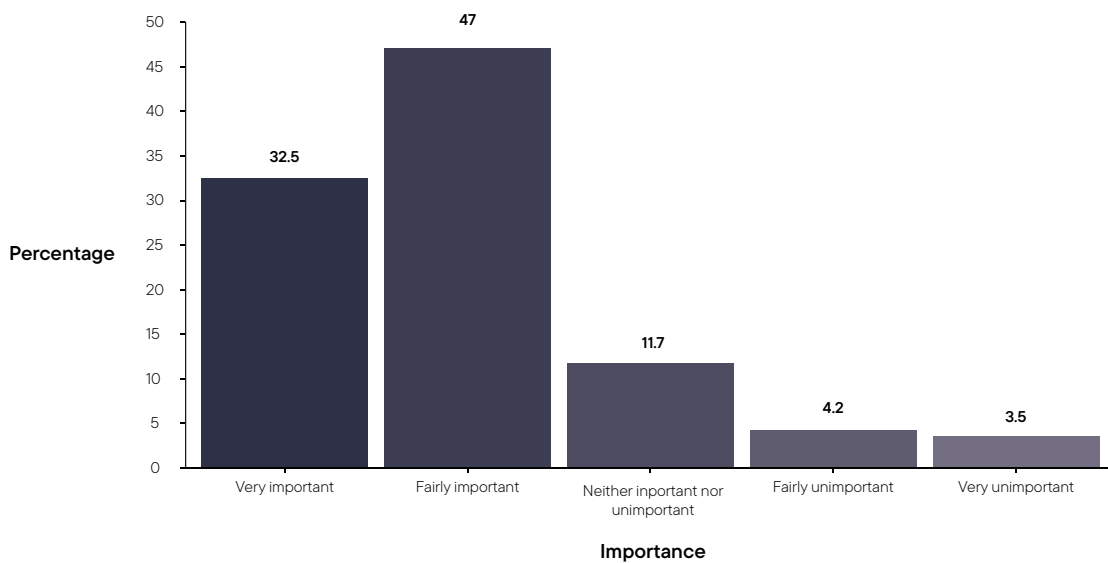


Figure 1 presents an overview of the results delivered after all 2,004 UK adult respondents were asked the following question: “how important is it to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner?”¹³

¹³ In this analysis, 1.1% of the respondents responded “don’t know/not sure” when asked “How important is it to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner?” (this is not shown on Figure 1).

Around one in three respondents (32.5%) believed that it was very important for them to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner. A further 47% stated that this was “fairly important” – meaning that around four in five respondents believed that it was either very or “fairly important” to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner (79.5% to be exact). In the analysis, 11.7% respondents felt that it is neither important nor unimportant to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner. While 4.2% said that it was “fairly unimportant”, a further 3.5% stated that it was “very unimportant” to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner (7.7% in total).

Figure 2: Sense of belonging in work/employment as an area of life (employed & self-employed respondents)

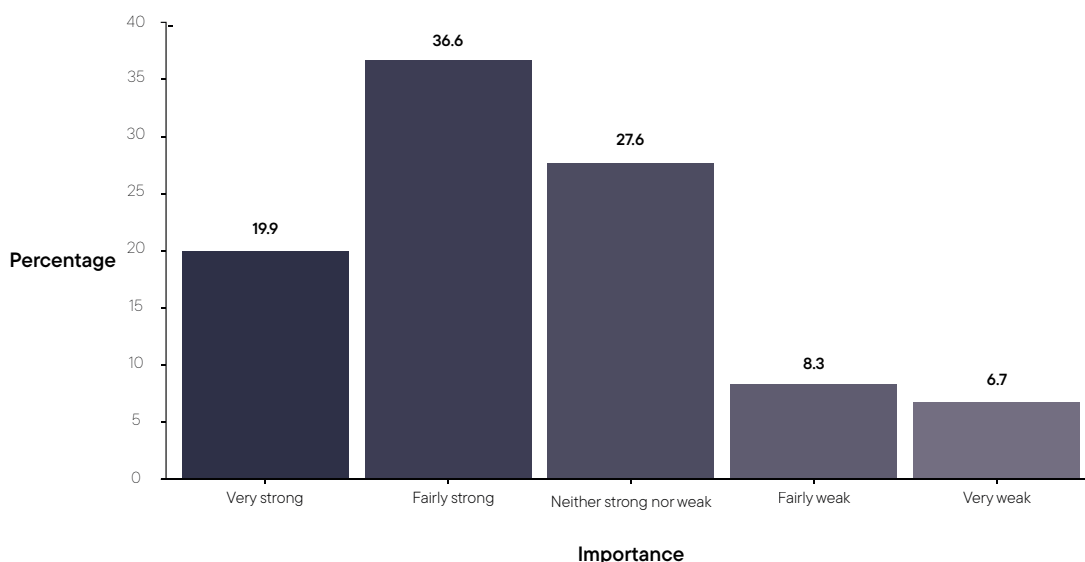


Figure 2 presents an overview of how employed and self-employed UK respondents felt about their strength of belonging in the "life area" of work/employment.¹⁴

One in five respondents who were either employed or in self-employment felt a very strong sense of belonging in their work-related life (19.9% to be exact). A further 36.6% – over one in three respondents – described their sense of belonging in this sphere of life as “fairly strong”. This means that the majority of respondents in this employed/self-employed sample (56.5%) reported having either a “very strong” or “fairly strong” sense of belonging in their work-related life.

Over a quarter of respondents included in the analysis (27.6%) felt that their sense of belonging in their work-related life was neither strong nor weak. While 8.3% reported that their sense of belonging in the "life area" of work/employment was “fairly weak”, a further 6.7% described it as “very weak” – a total of 15%.

¹⁴ In this analysis, 0.9% of respondents responded “don’t know/not sure” when asked about their sense of belonging in the "life area" of work/employment (this is not shown on Figure 2).

Figure 3: Level of trust in work colleagues/professional contacts (employed & self-employed respondents)

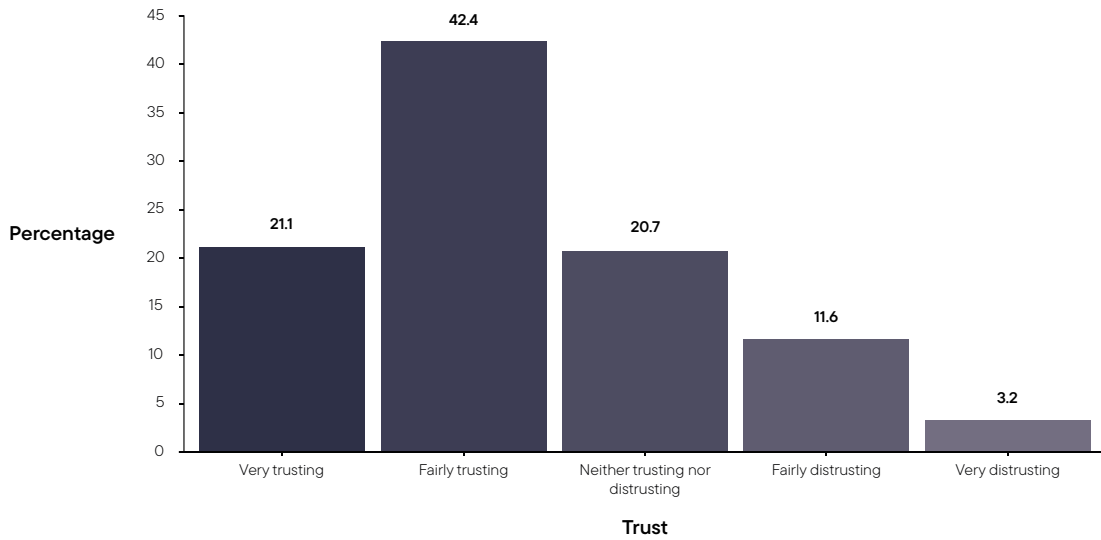


Figure 3 presents an overview of how trusting employed and self-employed UK respondents were of their work colleagues and professional contacts.¹⁵

More than one in five respondents who were either employed or in self-employment reported that they were very trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts overall – 21.1%. A further 42.4% – over two in five respondents – said that they were “fairly trusting” of their work colleagues and professional contacts. This means that around two in three respondents in this employed/self-employed sample reported being either “very trusting” or “fairly trusting” of their work colleagues and professional contacts – 63.5%.

Around one in five respondents included in the analysis (20.7%)– reported being neither trusting nor distrusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts. While over one in ten respondents (11.6%) said that they were fairly distrusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts, a further 3.2% reported being “very distrusting” (a total of 14.8%).

¹⁵ In this analysis, 1% of respondents responded “don’t know/not sure” when asked how trusting/distrusting they were of their work colleagues and professional contacts (this is not shown on Figure 3).

Figure 4: Level of job satisfaction (employed & self-employed respondents)

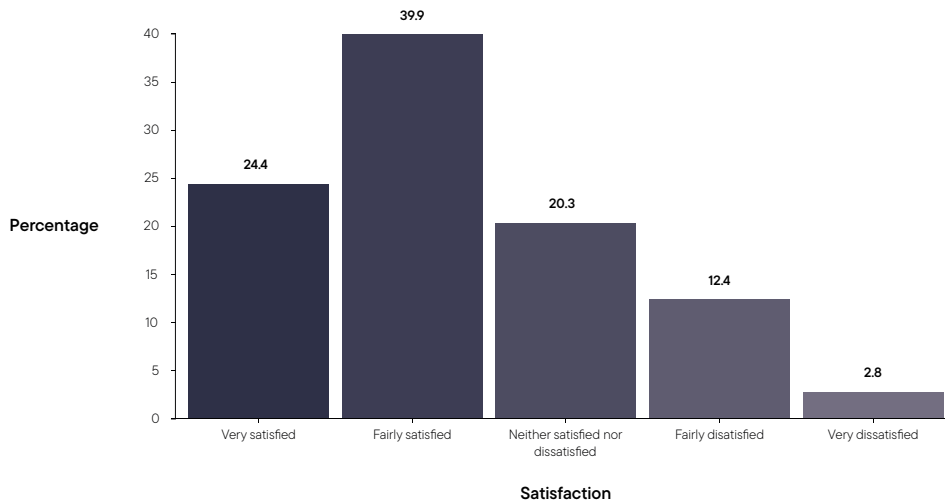
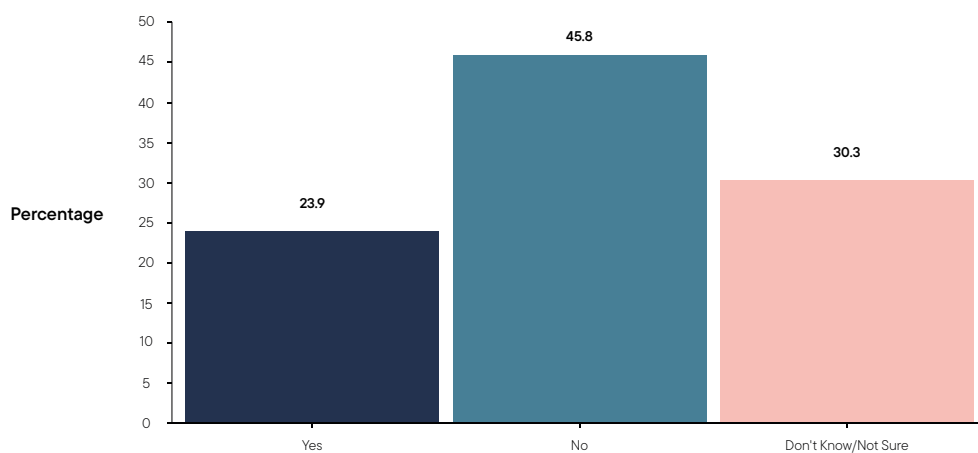


Figure 4 presents an overview of how satisfied (or dissatisfied) employed and self-employed UK respondents were with their job.¹⁶

Nearly a quarter of respondents who were either employed or in self-employment reported that they were very satisfied with their job overall (24.4%). Two in five respondents reported being satisfied with their job (39.9%). This means that around two in three respondents in this employed/self-employed sample reported being satisfied with their job (64.3%).

Around one in five respondents included in the analysis (20.3%) reported being neither satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. While one in eight respondents (12.4%) said that they were dissatisfied with their job, a further 2.8% reported being “very dissatisfied” (a total of 15.2%).

Figure 5: “Do you believe that the UK economy’s best days lie ahead?”



¹⁶ In this analysis, 0.3% of respondents responded “don’t know/not sure” when asked how satisfied/dissatisfied they are with their job (this is not shown on Figure 4).

Figure 5 presents an overview of the results delivered after all 2,004 UK adult respondents were asked the following question: “Do you believe that the UK economy’s best days lie ahead?”

Less than a quarter of respondents (23.9%) believe that the UK economy’s best days lie ahead, with 45.8% saying no. One in three respondents (30.3%) responded “don’t know/not sure” to this survey item.

Figure 6: Religiosity/Spiritual x Importance of responsibility and duty

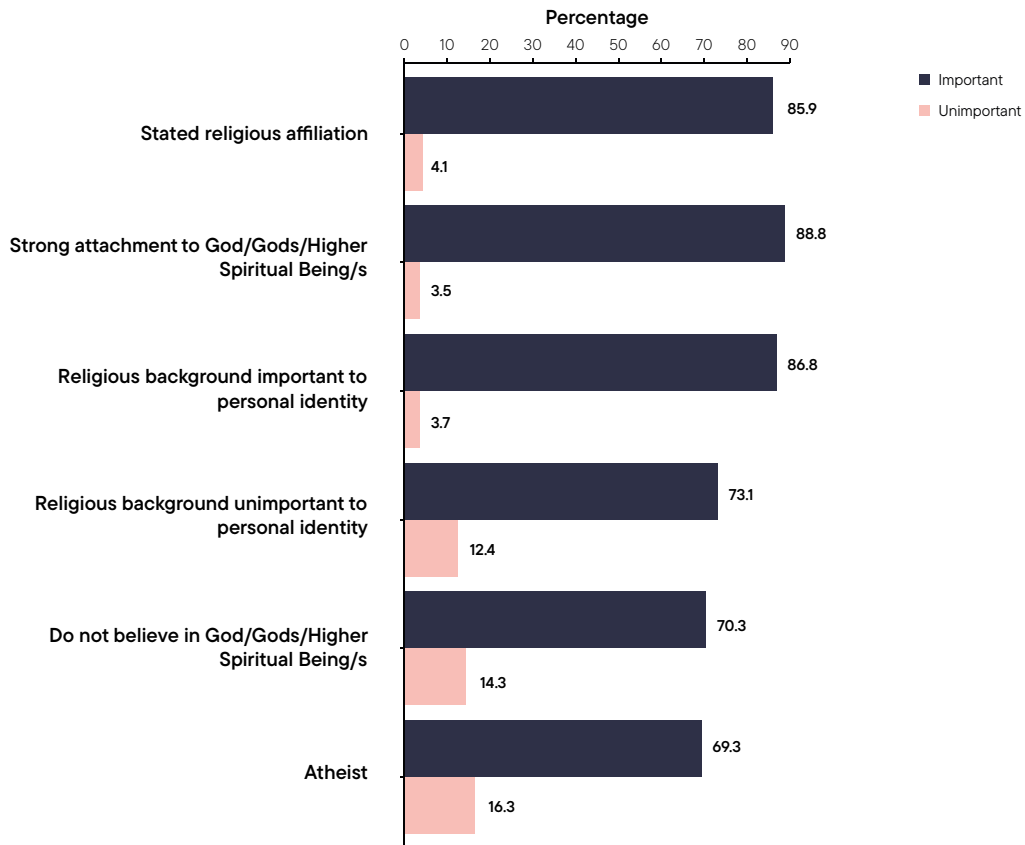


Figure 6 presents an overview of bivariate analyses exploring the relationship between religiosity (and spirituality) and the level of importance attached to carrying out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner.

Among respondents who stated that they had a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, nearly nine in ten (88.8%) said that carrying out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner is important (with 3.5% saying that it is unimportant). Among respondents who said they do not believe in God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, 70.3% say it is important to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner - a drop of 18.5 percentage points. Around one in seven respondents in this subsample said it is unimportant (14.3%).

Among respondents who stated a specific religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), 85.9% said that it is important to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner, with 4.1% (one in 25) saying that it is unimportant.

Among respondents who consider themselves to be atheist, less than seven in ten say that it is important to carry out the everyday responsibilities and duties of life in a thorough manner (69.3% - a drop of 16.6 percentage points), with 16.3% (one in six) saying that it is unimportant.

Figure 7: Religiosity/Spirituality x Trust in work colleagues & professional contacts

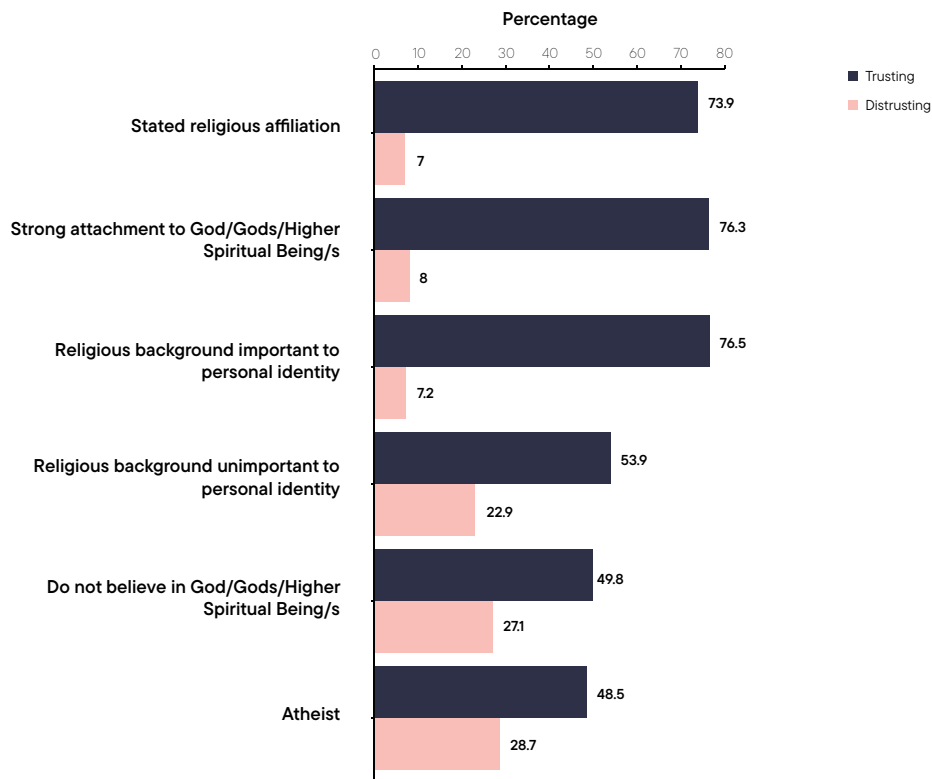


Figure 7 presents an overview of bivariate analyses exploring the relationship between religiosity (and spirituality) and the level of trust in work colleagues and professional contacts (among UK respondents who are either employed or in self-employment).

The general pattern of association – at the bivariate level – is that a higher degree of religiosity is linked to greater levels of trust in work colleagues and professional contacts. Among employed/self-employed respondents who said that their religious background was important to their personal identity, over three in four (76.5%) said they were trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts overall (with 7.2% saying that they were distrusting). Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated that their religious background was unimportant to their personal identity, 53.9% reported that they were trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (a drop of 22.6 percentage points) – with more than one in five saying that they were distrusting of such people in their work-related life (22.9%).

Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated that they had a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, more than three in four (76.3%) said they were trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (with 8% saying that they were distrusting). Among employed/self-employed respondents who said they do not believe in God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, the rate of job satisfaction falls to 48.9% - a drop of 26.5 percentage

points. More than a quarter of respondents within this subsample said they were distrusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (27.1%).

Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated a specific religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), around three in four reported being trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (73.9%), with 7% being distrusting of such people in their working life. Among employed/self-employed respondents who consider themselves to be atheist, less than half report being trusting of their work colleagues and professional contacts (48.5%), with 28.7% saying that they were distrusting of such people.

Figure 8: Religiosity/Spirituality x Job satisfaction

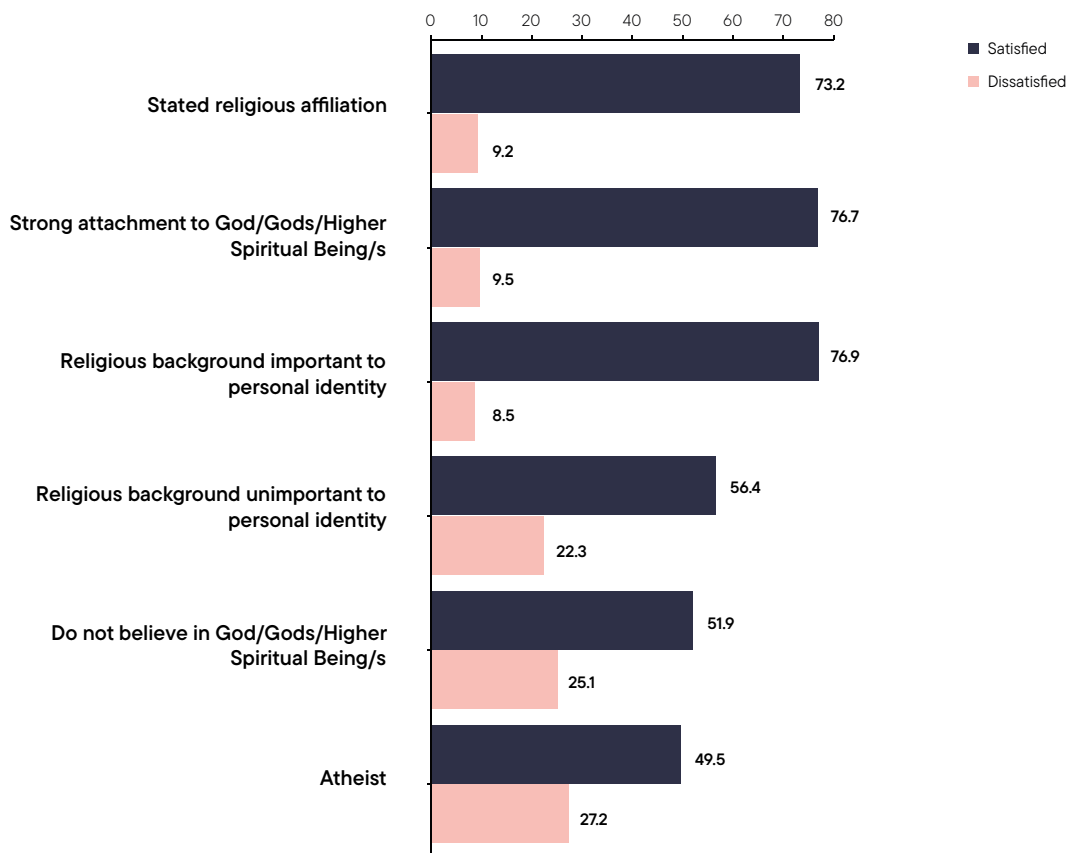


Figure 8 presents an overview of bivariate analyses exploring the relationship between religiosity (and spirituality) and job satisfaction in the UK (among those who are either employed or in self-employment).

The general pattern of association – at the bivariate level – is that a higher degree of religiosity is linked with greater rates of job satisfaction. Among employed/self-employed respondents who said that their religious background was important to their personal identity, over three in four (76.9%) reported being satisfied with their job (with 8.5% expressing overall job dissatisfaction). Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated that their religious background was unimportant to their personal identity, 56.4% reported job satisfaction (a

drop of more than 20 percentage points) – with more than one in five reporting that they were dissatisfied with their job (22.3%).

Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated that they had a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, more than three in four (76.7%) reported job satisfaction (with 9.5% being dissatisfied with their job). Among employed/self-employed respondents who said they do not believe in God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, the rate of job satisfaction falls to 51.9% – a drop of nearly 25 percentage points. One in four respondents in this subsample reported being dissatisfied with their job – 25.1% to be exact.

Among employed/self-employed respondents who stated a specific religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), around three in four report job satisfaction (73.2%), with 9.2% being dissatisfied with their job. Among employed/self-employed respondents who consider themselves to be atheist, less than half report being satisfied with their job (49.5%), with more than a quarter (27.2%) expressing job dissatisfaction.

Figure 9: Feelings on how employer respects religious beliefs and accommodates religious practices (religious respondents only)

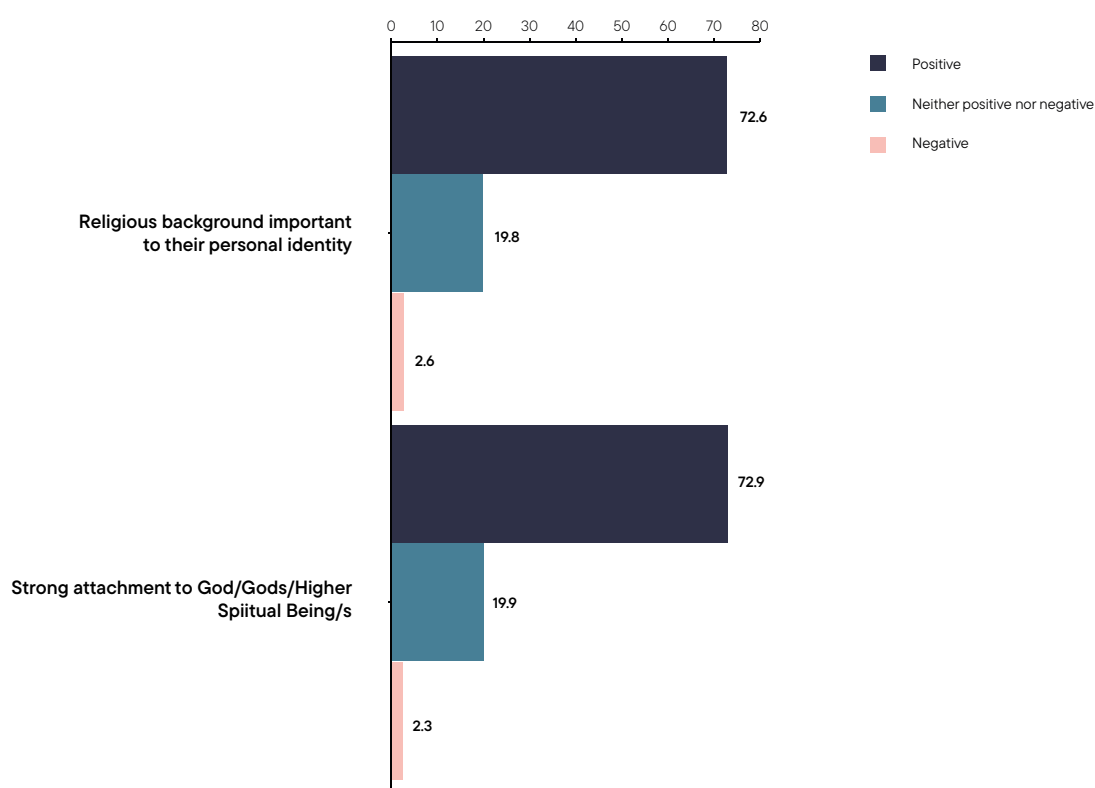


Figure 9 presents an overview of how religious respondents (who are employed by an organisation, institution, firm etc) feel about how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates their religious practices. Two specific categories of religiosity are included in this bivariate analysis: religious background being important to one’s personal identity and having a strong attachment to God/Gods/ Higher Spiritual Being/s.

The analysis shows that approximately three in four religious respondents who are employed feel positively about how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates for their religious practices (72.6% for those who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity and 72.9% for those who state that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s).

One in five employed religious respondents in the survey feel neither positively or negatively about how their employer respects their religious beliefs and accommodates for their religious practices (19.8% for those who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity and 19.9% for those who state that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s).

A tiny proportion of employed religious respondents in the survey reported feeling negatively about how their employer respected their religious beliefs and accommodated for their religious practices (2.6% for those who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity and 2.3% for those who state that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s).

Figure 10: Religiosity/Spirituality x “Do you think the UK economy’s best days lie ahead?”

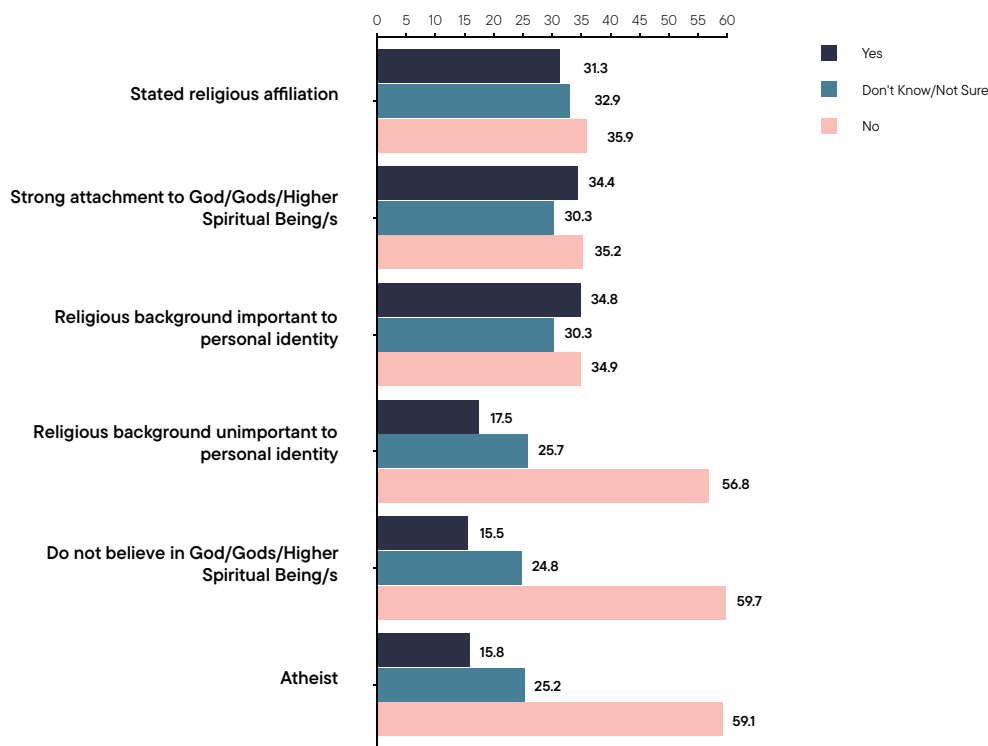


Figure 10 presents an overview of the bivariate analyses exploring the relationship between religiosity (and spirituality) and optimism over the future of the UK economy (with respondents being asked whether they believe the UK economy’s best days lie ahead).

The data suggests that there is a relationship between higher levels of religiosity and greater levels of optimism over the future of the UK economy. Among those who say that their religious background is important to their personal identity, 34.8% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead (with a near-identical percentage of 34.9% clearly stating that they do not believe this). Among those who say that their religious background is unimportant to their personal identity, 17.4% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead – a drop of 17.4 percentage points. In this latter group, a clear majority (56.8%) categorically do not believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead (responding “no” to the question).

This pattern of association is replicated when it comes to attachment (if any) to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s. Among those who say that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, 34.4% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead (with 35.2% saying that they do not believe this to be the case). For those who say that they do not believe in the existence of God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s, 15.5% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead. Nearly three in five respondents in this category (59.7%) categorically do not believe this (responding “no” to the question).

Among the respondents with a stated religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jewish), 31.3% believe the UK economy's best days lie ahead, with 35.9% clearly believing this is not a possibility by responding “no” to the question. For the respondents who consider themselves to be atheist, 15.8% believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead – a drop of 15.5 percentage points. Among atheist respondents, nearly three in five categorically do not believe that the UK economy's best days lie ahead (59.1%).



Table 1: Ordinal Logistic Regression Model – Relationship between Attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s and Job Satisfaction in the UK

	Job Satisfaction (Model 1)	
	Log Odds Ratio	Standard Error
Female	.159	.125
Age group: 18-24 years (REF)		
25-34 years	-.290	.294
35-44 years	-.316	.204
45-54 years	.277	.207
55-64 years	.415*	.208
65 years and above	.955**	.284
Education level: Postgraduate (REF)		
Degree or equivalent	.258	.184
A-level or equivalent	-.164	.194
GCSE or equivalent	-.770**	.278
No formal qualifications	-.780	.445
Other/PNTS	-.571	.300
Employment type: Employed (REF)		
Self-employed	-.363	.369
Race: White (REF)		
Asian	-.163	.213
Black	.013	.244
Mixed	.855*	.412
Other/PNTS	-1.009	.484
Strength of Attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s: Very strong (REF)		
Neither strong nor weak	-.638**	.155
Weak	-.501*	.198
Does not believe in God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s	-.815**	.190
Don't Know/Not Sure	-.356	.241
/cut1	-4.470	.604
/cut2	-2.523	.267
/cut3	-1.257	.268
/cut4	.626	.266

Table 1 presents an overview of ordinal logistic regression analysis for a model predicting for job satisfaction in the UK (among both employed respondents and those in self-employment).¹⁷ The key independent variable of interest is a strength of attachment (if any)

17 Note for Model 1: N = 1,315. P-value<0.05. (.000). -2LL: 1762.15. Pseudo R Squared: 0.05. Source: IIFL/ Techne Sept-Oct 2023 Survey. *p<0.05. **p<0.01.

to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s. Each model controls for five key socio-demographic characteristics: sex, age, education level, employment type and race.

Controlling for all other variables, there is a statistically significant relationship between strength of personal attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s and job satisfaction (after controlling for the five socio-demographic variables mentioned).

In Model 1, respondents who say that they do not believe in the existence of God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s are significantly less likely to report job satisfaction than those who say that they have a strong attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s ($b = -.815$) – controlling for sex, age, education, socio-economic status and race. This finding is statistically significant at the 1% confidence level. Controlling for the five key socio-demographic variables, respondents who say that their attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s is weak are also significantly less likely to report job satisfaction than those who say that their attachment is strong ($b = -.501$). This finding is statistically significant at the 5% confidence level. Controlling for all other variables in Model 1, those who say they have neither a strong or weak attachment to God/Gods/Higher Spiritual Being/s are significantly less likely to report job satisfaction than those who say their attachment is strong ($b = -.638$). This finding is statistically significant at the 1% confidence level.

4. Conclusion

Through this report, the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life has broken into underexplored territory by investigating how faith and spirituality relates to job satisfaction in the United Kingdom.

While this is a relatively developed area of research in the United States (where faith continues to play an integral part in political discourse and wider public life), the UK's unquestionable process of rapid mainstream secularisation (but also growing religious heterogeneity) means that faith-based devotion and belief in divine (and spiritual) power/s should feature more in the investigation of what shapes and influences key social and economic outcomes.

This report finds that in the UK, higher degrees of religiosity is linked to greater levels of trust in work colleagues (and professional contacts), job satisfaction, and optimism over the future of the UK's currently stagnant economy which continues to suffer with productivity issues. As highlighted by the IIFL's inaugural report *Keep the Faith: Mental Health in the UK*, religious Britons are notably more likely to self-report positive psychological wellbeing and better mental health outcomes relating to resilience, self-control, and happiness. When one takes into consideration that faith and spirituality can pave the path towards greater mental toughness, more positive life outlooks and higher levels of optimism over the future, then it should not necessarily be surprising that religious Britons report better rates of job satisfaction than atheists and non-believers. There is the possibility that these faith-related and spiritually-inspired foundations equip individuals with the mental and psychological tools to cope with and manage the inevitable challenges and pressures that come with working life (especially when operating in the UK's traditionally competitive market economy).

This is potentially cemented by the fact that a comfortable majority of religious Britons in conventional employment (employed by an organisation, firm, institution etc) have a positive view on their employer's efforts to be respectful of their religious beliefs and to accommodate for their religious practices – as the nationally-representative survey conducted by TechneUK for this research very strongly indicates. Negative views of employers among the UK's religious people who are in conventional employment on matters of faith-related respect and accommodation appear to be remarkably fringe – in the region of 2.5% according to the polling. These findings further underscore the UK's reputation for being one of the leading countries in the world when it comes to the provision of religious freedoms and anti-discrimination protections on the grounds of religion (with “religion or belief” being enshrined as a protected characteristic in existing equalities legislation). The reality is that the UK outperforms major European Union (EU) member-states such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands on these fronts – which ought to be a source of national pride.

An especially important finding is that higher levels of religiosity are associated with greater levels of trust in work colleagues and professional contacts (among those who are either employed or in self-employment). There are several plausible explanations for this. Religious and spiritual forms of membership (incorporating frequent attendance at a place of worship)

may cultivate bonds of social trust and a strengthened sense of belonging, in turn fostering collaborative mindsets and enhancing cooperative behaviours which spill into work-related life. There is also the possibility that in tight-knit local communities with relatively high levels of religious-service attendance and comparatively low rates of work-related commuting, there is an overlap between one's "worshipping community" and "employment network" – with their close friends and well-trusted acquaintances crossing over both in some cases. The way various kinds of social trust across different spheres of life potentially relate to one another should be better explored in the UK to gain a deeper understanding of sense of belonging and identity formation in the domestic context.

Despite the UK's ever-increasing ethnic, racial, and religious heterogeneity, there remains a dearth of knowledge on a variety of social and economic outcomes for a diversity of groups (this is somewhat understandable due to the sheer volume of costs involved in carrying out such surveys in a rigorous manner). Indeed, the last full-scale survey into ethnic-minority socio-political attitudes and socio-cultural behaviours in the UK was the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (2010 EMBES). However, the academic and think tank communities of the UK should try their utmost to invest the needed time, energy, and resources into better understanding differences in social trust, mental wellbeing, and socio-economic incorporation (such as job satisfaction) between and within religious groups living in the UK.

It is also worth developing our collective understanding of the relationship between faith and employment – such as how one's religious beliefs and practices shape their approach to work, career choice and overall level of labour market integration. More widely, how faith, spirituality, and traditional folk practices relate to the inter-relationship between family stability, educational attainment, and socio-economic advancement should be more deeply investigated in the UK (especially in higher-achieving communities of Indian, Nigerian, and Chinese heritage).

The IIFL strives to further establish itself as a key contributor in this field of research through its ongoing activities and future publications.



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