

PERSONALITY AND RELIGIOSITY: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

52 college going students of Jalgaon were administered Big Five personality inventory by Costa and McCrae, and religiosity scale by Janbandhu. The study was designed to measure strength of association between five factors of personality and religiosity. It was hypothesized that, religiosity is negatively related with extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness; while relationship between religiosity and neuroticism is positive and significant. Data were treated by mean, standard deviation and product moment correlation. Strong positive relationship was found between neuroticism and religiosity; extraversion and religiosity were negatively related. Though not strong but negative and significant relationship was found between religiosity and openness. Agreeableness and conscientiousness were poorly associated with religiosity.

KEYWORDS: Personality, Religiosity, Extraversion, Neuroticism

INTRODUCTION

Before examining association between personality and religiosity, it is beneficial to take an account of a few definitions of personality. Earlier definitions of personality were circling around the mere profiling of an individual's traits (see Woodworth, 1930, Waren's Dictionary, 1934, etc.) Allport's (1961) definition was one of the most inclusive; it states; "Personality is the dynamic within the individual's unique adjustments to the environment." More recent definitions of personality state that, "Personality is the complex organization of cognitions, affects, and behaviors that give direction and pattern to the person's life (Pervin, 1996). According to Funder (1977), "Personality refers to an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns."

Some important terms, 'Adjustment to the environment', 'Affects and Behaviors', 'Patterns of Thought', that are referred in these definitions, are influenced by the religious teachings the children receive at home. For example, children are taught to think of god as a person who will become angry when they do something wrong, and that he always punishes people for their sins, they will have very different beliefs about religion than will children to whom god has been presented in a different way. (Nelson, 1971..). It tells us that socialization is important in the development of personality. In a country like India, where there are several religions and hundreds of different sects, socialization at early age is greatly influenced by religious teachings. So, there is every possibility that along with the development of behavioral characteristics, religiosity also develops. It might vary in degree, but along with some behavioral characteristics, religiosity might go on increasing. Association between personality and religiosity was studied by many researches. (Gupta, 1969; Roschek, 1973).

Sally & Jeanne (1980) measured personality traits of 102 undergraduates by 16 PF; and religious identification, religious upbringing etc by self-devised measure. Strong association was found between personality traits and religious identification. Wicho & Fleck (1980) compared personality profiles of 158 Canadian University freshmen across religious orientation and religious affiliation. Significant differences were found across religious affiliation for certain personality variables. Todd & Brown (2003), and Francis & Jackson (2003) also, found relationship between personality characteristics and religiosity. In present study, five big factors of personality of 52 college going students are measured along with religiosity among them. Both, direction and magnitude of relationship between personality traits and religiosity are examined.

Aim of Study

Aim of the study was to measure extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness of the subjects, along with religiosity, and measure the strength of association between personality traits and religiosity.

Hypothesis

- Extraversion characteristics and religiosity are negatively and significantly related to each other.
- There is a strong negative relationship between agreeableness and religiosity.
- Strength of association between conscientiousness and religiosity is negative and significant.
- There is a strong positive relationship between neuroticism and religiosity.
- Openness to experience is negatively and significantly related to religiosity.

Sample

Total sample of the study consisted of 52 graduate students randomly drawn from a coeducational institution of Jalgaon. There were 30 boys and 22 girls. Their age range was 22-24 years.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Big Five Factor Inventory

This inventory was constructed and standardized by Costa & Mc Crae. There are 60 items in the inventory and each item was provided with five alternatives. It measures five big factors of personality. The authors have provided several reliability and validity indices.

Religiosity Scale

This scale was constructed and developed by Janbandhu. It consists of 36 statements related to god, religion and supernatural forces. Each statement is provided with three alternatives. Test – Re-Test reliability is .83. Procedure of Data Collection

The scales were administered on small groups of students, following the instructions laid down by the authors. Before administering the scales, appropriate rapport was formed.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Total sample of 52 subjects was treated as a group and for this group, first means and standard deviations were computed for the scores obtained by them on five different factors of personality and religiosity. On neuroticism, the group had a mean and SD of 30.23 ± 10.16 , on extraversion the values are 34.73 ± 7.46 ; on openness they are 30.77 ± 7.82 ; agreeableness has 28.88 ± 4.41 ; conscientiousness has 26.35 ± 5.70 ; and on religiosity measure they are 20.96 ± 7.20 . From these values it is clear that the distribution of scores in all the six measures is more or less normal.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between Religiosity and Five Factors of Personality

	N	E	O	A	C
Religiosity	.90**	-.93**	-.30*	.18	-.21
	Significant at.01 level	Significant at.01 level	Significant at.05 level		
	N = Neuroticism	E= Extraversion	O=Openness	A= Agreeableness	C= Conscientiousness

Correlation coefficient between religiosity and Neuroticism was found to be very high, positive and significant ($r=.90$; $df= 50$; $p < .01$). As the neuroticism is increasing, religiosity is also increasing. These results are in line with the assumption of study. When there is predominance of neuroticism, there is less scope for rational thinking. Absence of rational thinking is favorable for religiosity.

Extraversion was negatively related to religiosity ($r= -.93$; $df= 50$; $p < .01$). This correlation coefficient denoted that, as extraversion increases, religiosity decreases. The results favor the assumption of the study. Low negative but significant relationship was found between openness to experience and religiosity ($r= -.30$; $df = 50$; $p < .05$). However, the other two relationships failed to support the hypotheses. Correlation Coefficients between acceptance and religiosity, and conscientiousness and religiosity were low and non-significant.

Thus, the results supported the first three hypotheses, while the last two hypotheses remained unsatisfied. On the basis of the results following conclusions were drawn:

- Religiosity was positively and strongly related to neuroticism.
- Relationship between extraversion and religiosity was negative and very strong.
- Openness to experience and religiosity were negatively and significantly related.
- Agreeableness and Conscientiousness had shown non-significant relationship with religiosity.

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