

## Studying the relationship between personality traits and religious orientation in women and men

**Jafar Ghorbany**

Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

**Gholamreza Nasiri**

Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

### Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between the personality traits and religious orientation in women and men. This research in terms of purpose is practical and in terms of quiddity and method is descriptive-survey. The statistical population includes the students of Shahid Beheshti University (12000 persons). According to Krejcie-Morgan table, the sample size was estimated 330 persons. The sampling method is available quota classification. The independent variables of the research include the variable of main traits of personality which was assessed according to 16-factor personality questionnaire of Ketel with 184 three-option questions and gender variable. Dependent variables of the research include intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation which was analyzed according to the scale of Allport religious orientation. In order to analyze the data, Regression tests with step by step method, Chi-square test, t-test and correlation with SPSS software were used. The results showed that four factors of **G, H, B, Q1** were valid anticipators for religious orientation respectively, but personality factors are not valid from this view. Also the determination coefficient indicated that the total of the four factors listed explains 35.9% of religious orientation changes. Also according to the results, most of the men (58.6%) had extrinsic religious orientation and most of the women (70.9%) had intrinsic religious orientation. Also Chi-square test showed that the difference observed in two genders is meaningful in terms of religious orientation.*

**Keywords:** personality, religious orientation, intrinsic, extrinsic, women, men.

## **Introduction**

With considering the role and position of religion in all aspects of life on one hand and the importance of personality as the main factor in relation with behavior orientation on the other hand, searching for responding to this question that whether the main traits of personality are effective in religious orientation or not, seems important.

Yung has said about the history of religious presence in life and human communities that, this can't be denied that religion is one of the oldest and deepest demonstrations of human spirit and therefore it is clear that any kind of psychology which deals with the mental structure of human personality, at least can't ignore this fact that religion isn't just a social and historical phenomenon, rather for most of the humans it is as an important personal issue (Yung, 39:1991).

Frankl, Viktor the founder of logotherapy school has acknowledged about religion that in fact there is a deep religious feeling in the depths of unconscious mind of human (Frankel, 1991). William James, American psychologist knows the religion as the effects of feelings and events which occur for human in solitude world and away from all dependencies (Nelson, 1990). Ali (peace be upon him) has expressed about different approaches of religion in this manner that the persons who worship God are three groups. Some worship God due to the willingness and desire to something or an incentive and that is the worship of merchants; some worship God due to the fear of punishment and that is the worship of servants. The others know God as a nature that is worthy of worshipping and they worship him due to the thanksgiving and that is the worship of freedmen (Nejat, Osman, 1998). The fact is that the kind of training, person's feedbacks of ethnic culture, family and personal situations in society and also the existing experiences during the life and especially in childhood and adolescence years are the things which determine the viewpoint and perception of humans about the phenomena of this world. The psychological interpretation of this concept is in this manner that each viewpoint has constituted of three cognitive, emotional and behavioral components (Karimi, 1998). Religious belief and viewpoints are not excepted from this rule. Religious viewpoint has a direct relationship with the quality of cognitive growth of persons; because basically religious beliefs are incarnated in the form of words and therefore achieving the abstract intelligence is necessary for perceiving the depth of religious concepts (Arzhil, 2000). Emotional foundation of persons is effective in all orientations of them. This effect becomes more serious about religious orientations. Because some religious psychologists like Wats and Williams believe that religion is an array of emotions. They reason that emotions like honoring and fearing play role in religious customs and ceremonies obviously (Schultz, 1999). About behavioral dimension, the reason of special behaviors is considered and in explaining each special behavior before anything the strengthening mechanisms, silence, generalization, segregation and like them is expressed. In fact in this school mainly environmental and extrinsic determining forces and also specificity of each behavioral situation are emphasized and considered. But there

is no discussion about the existence of natural preparations in person for behaving with special method (Parvin, 1995).

### **Empirical background of the research**

The vast studies conducted about the relation of religion with personality dimensions repeatedly have shown that religion has no relationship with two main factors of extroversion and indignant mental temperament. But the same studies indicate that the scale of discrete mental temperament has had negative relation with religiosity in a relatively stable manner (Arzhil, 2000).

Fransis in a research which was constituted of 1347 14-16- year- old adolescents studied these findings about the criteria of the presence rate in church and religious feedbacks and he gained similar results (Nelson, 1990).

Arzhil and Halami (1989), in a research in which 233 adults took part, recorded these same results about the criteria of religious emotion and membership in church. Of course it is necessary to be said that here the term of discrete mental temperament hasn't been applied literally, rather the meaning of it is to refer to the concept of stubbornness and lack of concern about others. However the same studies have shown continuously that religious persons gain more scores in scale of lying. This finding requires to be explained too, because the scale of lying in such cases hasn't been used as a criterion for assessment of honesty, rather it has been studied more as a criterion for assessment of surrendering and satisfaction, obedience and conformity.

The second plan of main personality dimensions named, 5 main traits has been performed by Mac Crea and Costa (1985). Among these 5 factors (gaiety, compatibility, loyalty, emotional stability and culture), culture which is reminisced as accepting the new experiences has interrelation with religiosity in some ways.

### **The definition of concepts**

**Religion:** in Dehkhoda lexicon 91973), religion means creed, doctrine, responsibility and the opposite of blasphemy. In Oxford (1989) several interpretations have been mentioned for religion: 1)believing to the existence of a God which is dominant on the world and gives spiritual nature to the human and it flows in his/her entity after physical death. 2)A part of believing and worshipping system which is based on the person's faith like Moslems, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus. 3)Controlling and influencing on the person's life.

Hume (1993) knows the religion as that aspect of experiences, thoughts, feelings and activities of person that through it the human attempts to live in relation with what he/she considers sacred and divine namely very transcendental and valuable power which controls the world.

Motahari (1987) knows the religion as a friendly link between human and world in religious faith frame which in fact is a kind of conformity between human and general aims of the world.

Javadi Amoli (1987) has known the religion word as submission, humility, obedience, surrendering, penalty and he has defined its idiomatic meaning as the set of beliefs, morals, provisions which are for governing the human society affairs and training them.

### **The research hypotheses**

#### **The main hypothesis**

The main traits of personality and religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) are interrelated.

#### **Subsidiary hypotheses**

2-Women have more tendencies to the intrinsic religious orientation than men.

3-Men and women differ from each other in terms of main traits.

4-Men and women differ from each other in terms of relationship between the main traits of personality and religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic).

#### **Methodology**

This research in terms of purpose is practical and in terms of quiddity and method is descriptive-survey. The statistical population includes the students of Shahid Beheshti University (12000 persons). According to Krejcie-Morgan table, the sample size was estimated 330 persons. The sampling method is available quota classification. Independent variables of the research include: 1)the main traits of personality; these traits include 16 cases which are assessed by 16-factor questionnaire of ketel with 184 three-option questions. The balanced score of each trait is between the negative pole of 1 and positive pole of 10, 2) gender. Dependent variables of the research include; 1)intrinsic religious orientation; in the scale of Allport religious orientation, the subjects which take the score of 13 and higher are called eligible of extrinsic religious orientation; 2)extrinsic religious orientation; in the scale of Allport religious orientation, the subjects which take the score of 12 and lower are called eligible of extrinsic religious orientation. In order to analyze the data, Regression tests with step by step method, Chi-square test, t-test and correlation with SPSS software were used.

#### **Findings**

1-The main traits of personality and religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) are interrelated.

**Table 1- variance table for studying the validity of Regression analysis with step by step method**

Factors	Variance source Index	Total squares	Freedom degree	Variance or mean of squares	Meaningfulness	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Q1	The total remaining Regression	409.053 1992.53 2 2301.58 6	1 326	409.053 18.280	0.0001	0.41 3	0.17 0
Q1, B	The total remaining Regression	543.286 1858.29 9 240.586	2 325	271.643 17.206	0.0001	0.47 6	0.22 6
Q1,B,H	The total remaining Regression	614.94 1787.09 1 2401.58 6	3 324	204.831 19.702	0.0001	0.50 6	0.25 6
Q1,B,H, G	The total remaining Regression	683.418 1718.16 8 2401.58 6	4 323	170.855 16.209	0.0001	0.59 7	0.35 9

According to table 1, the Regression is meaningful ( $p=0.0001$ ). Analysis conducted with step by step method shows that four factors of G,H,B,Q1 are valid anticipators for religious orientation respectively but the other twelve personality factors are not valid from this view. In this form that in 4 factors listed, anticipating is more than the error probability and it is meaningful statistically but this ratio isn't confirmed in other factors. Also the determination coefficient indicates that the total of four factors listed explains 35.9% of religious orientation changes.

**Table 2-anticipation coefficients of religious orientation Regression according to the personality traits**

Regression indexes Anticipator factors	B	Standard error	Beta	t	Meaningfulness
Fixed amount	16.346	2.042	-	8.005	0.0001
Q1	-1.069	0.208	-0.425	-5.137	0.0001
B	0.424	0.156	0.225	2.715	0.0008

H	-0.526	0.123	-0.197	-2.364	0.020
G	0.433	0.210	0.173	2.062	0.042

According to table 2 in terms of anticipating importance (Beta coefficient) Q1,B,H,g factors are in the first to fourth ranks respectively. With this difference that Q1 and H factors due to have negative sign of anticipator have tendency to the extrinsic religious orientation and vice versa B and G factors due to have positive sign of anticipator have tendency to the intrinsic religious orientation. According to the Beta coefficients in Q1 factor, 0.425% and in H factor, 0.197% of the subject score will be added in extrinsic religious orientation. In B factor, 0.225% and in G factor, 0.173% of the subject score will be added in intrinsic religious orientation.

**2-Women have more tendencies to the intrinsic religious orientation than men**

**Table 3- the frequency and percent of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation in two genders and Chi-square test**

Gender	Orientation	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Square	Freedom degree	Meaningfulness
	Frequency					
Male	Frequency	72	108	50.18	1	0.000
	percent	41.4	58.6			
Female	Frequency	114	37			
	percent	70.9	29.1			

According to table 3, most of the men (58.6%) have extrinsic religious orientation and most of the women (70.95) have intrinsic religious orientation. Also Chi-square test shows that the difference observed in two genders is meaningful in terms of religious orientation. Therefore female persons in terms of the kind of religiosity are in a manner that firstly they generally gain the scores higher than 13 in religious orientation test and have intrinsic religious orientation and secondly in terms of combining the persons of group in the kind of religiosity they are more homogenous than the male group. But in male group, some persons may be at the lowest religiosity ranks and the others may be at the highest intrinsic religiosity levels. According to the standard deviation, the scores of religious orientation of men (5.109) justify this issue well.

**Table 4- the result of t-test for comparing the religious orientation between two genders**

Index Gender	frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Freedom degree	Meaningfulness
Male	180	11.111	5.109			
Female	150	13.392	3.155	4.060	328	0.001

According to table 4, the results of t-test ( $t=4.06$  and  $sig=0.001$ ) indicate that the means of two male(11.111) and female (13.292) groups have meaningful difference with each other and these two groups in confidence level of 95 percent in the mean amount of religious orientation are different with each other.

### 3-Men and Women are different in terms of the main personality traits.

**Table 5- the result of t-test for comparing the women and men in terms of personality traits**

Factor Index	Gender		Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Freedom degree	Meaningful ness
	Male	Female								
A	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation				
B	180	6.25	2.09	150	5.81	2.10	1.107	328	0.273	
C	180	6.22	2.63	150	6.91	2.29	0.073	328	0.942	
F	180	2.93	1.80	150	3.25	1.78	0.912	328	0.364	
F	180	5.62	1.75	150	5.13	1.48	1.575	328	0.118	
G	180	4.73	1.87	150	2.73	1.72	0.003	328	0.998	
H	180	5.65	1.99	150	5.48	1.70	0.280	328	0.632	
I	180	5.30	1.80	150	5.10	1.80	0.838	328	0.398	
L	180	5.98	0.51	150	6.23	1.70	-0.802	328	0.225	
M	180	2.63	1.85	150	3.88	1.90	-0.669	328	0.505	

N	180	1.10	1.88	150	6.92	1.72	0.454	328	0.651
O	180	5.60	1.78	150	5.10	1.68	1.398	328	0.137
Q	180	6.76	1.53	150	6.68	1.53	0.324	328	0.736
Q1	180	6.10	1.88	150	5.43	1.77	1.930	328	0.056
Q2	180	4.89	1.99	150	2.88	1.84	0.038	328	0.970
Q3	180	5.90	1.86	150	6.02	1.77	-0.332	328	0.740
Q4	180	6.60	1.70	150	6.56	1.49	0.132	328	0.895

According to table 5, with regard to this point that the meaningfulness column isn't less than 0.05 in none of the cases, it can be concluded that two genders don't have meaningful difference in none of the personality components and consequently the second subsidiary hypothesis isn't confirmed.

**4-Men and women are different in terms of relationship between the main traits of personality and religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic).**

**Table 6- the correlation of religious orientation with personality traits and age and comparing two genders in terms of correlations**

Religious orientation Factors Index	Correlation with religious orientation			Z related to the correlation
	General sample	Correlation coefficient with male group	Correlation coefficient with female group	Coefficient difference
A	0.0918	0.1108	0.2148	-0.2838
B	0.208*	0.262*	0.145	+0.323
C	-0.026	-0.008	-0.184	0.471
E	-0.092	-0.036	-0.058	0.058



F	-0.032	-0.010	-0.091	0.215
G	0.239*	0.221	0.263	-0.362
H	-0.267**	-0.290*	-0.204	-0.243
I	0.092	0.042	0.130	-0.235
L	-0.069	-0.137	-0.029	-0.288
M	0.001	-0.032	0.137	-0.449
N	-0.181	-0.172	-0.086	-0.284
O	0.017	-0.078	0.262	-0.917
Q1	-0.413**	-0.300**	-0.3538	-0.145
Q2	-0.130	-0.133	-0.158	0.068
Q3	0.085	0.126	-0.020	0.388
Q4	-0.038	-0.183	0.323*	-1.376
Age	-0.251**	-0.130	-0.249	0.327

According to table 6, the Pearson correlation of religious orientation has been determined with each one of the ketel-test factors and the age of subjects. In general sample, this correlation is positive about factors B and G and it is negative and meaningful in Q1 and H and the age of subjects. In other cases, the correlations aren't meaningful. With comparing the correlations related to two genders, this point becomes clear that in personality traits of Q3, Q1, N, L, H, B, the correlation of personality traits and the score of religious orientation in male group are higher than the female group and in the remainder of personality traits, the correlations related to female group are more. Also, the age correlation and religious orientation in female group are higher. But in the left column of table which indicates the test of correlation coefficients difference of two genders, all Zs gained from critical amount are lower for confidence level of 0.05% ( $Z=1.96$ ). Therefore, none of the differences observed between the correlations aren't meaningful, consequently the third subsidiary hypothesis isn't confirmed.

### Conclusion

Here a summary of findings is presented:

-In this research with regard to the meaningfulness of Regression and multiple correlations and some of two-variable correlations between religious orientation and personality components, the relationship between them was confirmed. Namely with 16-factor personality traits and the correlation coefficient the kind of religious orientation with approximate probability (35.9%) can be anticipated. Of course after studying the correlation of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation with each one of 16 factors of the personality test of Ketel, it was determined that among different personality factors, factor B which is related to the abstract thought and the things related to the intelligence test and factor G which refers to the responsibility, fundamentalism and adherence to morality due to have positive sign, have positive relationship with intrinsic religious orientation and factor Q which is related to liberalism, empiricism and criticism and

factor H which is related to the traits like pluralism, superficiality, presumption and artistic interests due to have negative sign are correlated with extrinsic religious orientation.

If factor B which is related to the abstract thought, is the same factor that assesses the complicated thoughts and beliefs, it should be acknowledged that with regard to the research background, according to Teson and Nits (1982), the correlation of this factor with searching religious orientation (Q) is more than the intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. But because in final analysis, the scales of searching religious orientation and intrinsic religious orientation in relation with positive and negative behavioral consequences are aligned and the main purpose of manufacturers of both scales has been a criterion for assessment of real religion, therefore factor B can be assumed an effective anticipator in real religiosity.

-With regard to this fact that in this research, most of the male persons had extrinsic religious orientation and vice versa most of the female subjects were eligible of intrinsic religious orientation, therefore it can be concluded that women and men are different in terms of religious orientation. This finding is in accordance with research background and different researches have acknowledged that women have more tendencies to the religion (ayzank, Mahfouzi and Jen Bozorgi, Robertz, quoted by Homeirazadeh, 1990). It has been also reported that the religiosity methods of women and men are different. Averagely, women in all methods and approaches are more religious than men and the closeness feeling and creating the spiritual connection with God have been reported averagely in lower ages (9-10 years). (Tamminen, 1994). Also women more than men feel guilty and perhaps due to this, the women present at fundamentalist churches which emphasize on guilt (Diright and Cox, quoted by arzhil, 2000).

-With regard to non-meaningfulness of T0tests related to compare two genders in terms of personality, this result was achieved that at present research, women and men don't have significant difference in terms of the main personality traits in Ketel-test. Generally, women and men have many personality differences and the main differences in their performance in different domains like religiosity largely refer to their personality differences in the fields of nature. For example, girls are more social and helper (Eagly, 1995). However in explaining this finding, it can be said that there is no significant difference between women and men and even the men who have femininity traits and vice versa. Therefore when the statistical population includes the academics, there is this probability that more equity is ruled among them. Also among the academics, gender roles have been decreased and we can have almost equal expectations of girl and boy. Of course equating the girl and boy is a process which starts from the first years of education and it is appeared in academics and graduation societies. And this fact that the personality differences of women and men are according to ketel's point of view arising from traits difference (Karimi, 1990). Now with regard to the general orientation of worldly culture in the field of equating the gender roles, it can be expected, that group of personality

differences of women and men which is arising from learning is decreasing (Biman, 1987). The finding of the present research is aligned with this reality.

-With regard to this fact that comparing the correlation of each personality component with religious orientation between two groups of men and women didn't show meaningful difference in none of the cases, this result was achieved that women and men aren't different in terms of the relation of religious orientation with the main personality traits. This result means that gender in relation of religious orientation doesn't have significant effect with the main personality traits. Namely although the women have more intrinsic religious orientation but because in general they haven't shown meaningful difference with men in terms of personality profile, consequently this interactive relation in two genders was determined without difference. Also according to 16-factor questionnaire of Ketel and intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation (Wib and Folk, 1980), the research findings have indicated the difference between personality profile of intrinsic and extrinsic religious ones but the difference of interaction between the personality traits and religious orientation in women and men hasn't been indicated and even in the appendix of other findings of the research, it hasn't been referred too. Therefore this finding can be considered non-conflicting with the research background.

### **Practical suggestions**

-The most important suggestion which is significant in terms of education is about actuating the youth toward the intrinsic religious orientation. According to the research results with necessary caution, a percent of the reason of tendency to the special kind of religious orientation by persons can be attributed to their personality traits. Therefore a significant percent of reasons or factors of religious orientation can be attributed to the environmental factors or learning. Therefore it can be recommended that in order to actuate the youth toward intrinsic religious orientation, we should pay attention to strengthen the traits like fundamentalism, responsibility, adherence to the morality and instead of direct teaching of religious beliefs, we should prepare the fields of actuating the person toward intrinsic religious orientation.

-In growth and nurture of the youth personality, we should perceive the real role of the environment or acquisition and we shouldn't stop the environmental enrichment and formal and informal education even for a moment.

-The parents should be aware of the girls and boys' differences in the kind of religiosity and also they should respect to their different expectations of religion.

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