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The Moderating Effects of Personality on Religiosity, Well-being, and Humor: A Cross-Faith Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the moderating role of personality traits in the relationships between religiosity, well-being, and humor styles among Christian and Muslim graduate students, with a focus on cross-faith differences. A cross-sectional survey research design was employed, collecting data from 60 Christian and 60 Muslim graduate students. Four, certified self-report scales were used for data collection. Stepwise regression analyses revealed that personality traits significantly influenced religiosity's associations with well-being and humor. Results revealed that agreeableness strengthened the positive religiosity-well-being link in Christians, while conscientiousness amplified religiosity's relationship with adaptive humor in Muslims. Neuroticism moderated religiosity's negative association with maladaptive humor in both groups, though effects were stronger among Muslims. Cross-faith comparisons underscored cultural and doctrinal nuances, with Christians showing stronger personality-mediated religiosity-well-being connections, whereas Muslims exhibited greater moderation in humor-related outcomes. These findings highlight the interplay of individual differences and religious contexts in shaping psychological outcomes, advocating for personalized approaches in counseling and community programs to enhance well-being and adaptive humor in religiously diverse settings.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Well-being, Religiosity, Humor Styles, Cross-faith

Introduction

Recent research has established important relationships between personality traits, religiousness, and psychological wellbeing in different population groups and in different cultural contexts. There is a strong indication steadily shows that conscientiousness and emotionally stable are the strongest positive correlations between religious beliefs and practice, whereas neurosis usually has a negative association (John & Srivastava, 1999; Wilt & Re Rellen, 2009).

Religiousness generally envisages better mental health outcomes, particularly in terms of depression, substance abuse and life satisfaction, but the strength of these relationships between different religious affiliations and cultural settings differs (Francis et al., 2010). Personality traits explain about 25% of mental health variance (more than just religiousness), but interactions between all three areas provide the most inclusive understanding of human psychological functioning. This overview synthesized the results of several studies to reveal how these



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interconnected aspects of human experience influence each other and contribute to general wells (Ashton & Lee, 2019).

Personality traits show a consistent pattern of association between religious beliefs and practices of various population groups (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Bouchard & Leehlin, 2001). A comprehensive study with over 15,000 participants in 60 countries inspected these relationships in seven important religious affiliations, providing one of the widest analyses of the religious connections of personality (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002). This study is based on previous works that have developed a reliable correlation between specific character dimensions and religious orientation. Of the five great personality traits, conscience and tolerance consistently show the strongest positive correlation with religion (Saroglou, 2002). In a study of students at Islamic University, basic religious beliefs showed moderate positive relationships between conscience and particularly strong positive relationships and validity (Pearson et al., 2014). These results suggest that more responsible, more self-disciplined, and supportive people tend to see religious beliefs and practices more easily than their counterparts. The relationship between conscience and religion is particularly robust and appears to be consistent across many studies and various religious traditions.

The relationship between religiousness and psychological wellbeing is well recognized, and religious commitment is often associated with life satisfaction, resilience, and emotional regulation (Koenig et al., 2012). However, the Humor, is not well known how individual differences, such as personality traits, modulate these associations. Moreover, in religious contexts, multiset structures include adaptive (aggressive and self-destructive) styles, and include adaptive (aggressive and self-destructive) styles. This study bridges these gaps by examining how Big Five's personality traits (openness, conscience, extra versions, tolerance, neuroticism) communicate the influence of religion on the style of happiness and humor among Christian and Muslim graduate students.

Personality, Religiosity, Well-being, and Humor

Religion, defined as the degree of religious faith and practice, is positively correlated with wellbeing through appliances such as social support, meaning, and coping (Pargament, 2002). Conversely, humor styles vary depending on psychological influence. Adaptive humor promotes social connection and stress reduction, whereas maladaptive humor can damage relationships (Martin et al., 2003). The influence of religiousness on humor remains contested. Some studies have shown that doctrinal limitations suppress humor (Saroglou & Anciaux, 2004), while others have emphasized the humorous form of faith.

Personality traits shape the way individuals deal with religious practices and perceive humor. For example, comfortable people can prioritize and improve on local government religious activities, whereas neurotic people are inadequately adapted to humor to cope with existential fears (Saroglou, 2010). Cross-gross comparisons are important because cultural and doctrinal differences (e.g., Christian emphasis on mercy to rituals of Islamic structures) are unique.

Research goals

The present study has the following objectives.

1. Examine how personality traits mitigate the association of religiousness with wells and humor styles.
2. Matching moderation patterns between Christian and Muslim graduate students.
3. Give practical insights for mental health interventions in the sense of faith.

Hypotheses

On the basis of broad literature analysis the following hypotheses were framed to test.

H1: There is a positive relationship between personality traits and Religiosity, Well-being, and Humor.

H2: Personality traits have moderation effect with Religiosity, Well-being, and Humor.

H3: There will be a difference of moderation effect between Christian and Muslim



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graduate students.

Method

Participants

This study is a cross-sectional survey design. The data was collected from a sample of 120 graduate students (N=120) from different colleges of Faisalabad (n=60 Christian, n=60 Muslim; Mean age = 24.8). After getting permission from the concerning officers, all the participants were contacted individually. Before administration the questionnaire, the objectives of the study were explained to the participants briefly.

Measures

Four scales were used to collect the data form the participants. The personality traits were measured by the Big Five inventory (Gosling et al., 2003) comprised on 10-items ($\alpha = 0.76-0.88$). Religiosity was measured by the Duke Religion Index (Koenig et al., 1997). This scale has 5-items ($\alpha = 0.86$). Well-being was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) consisting on 5-items ($\alpha = 0.89$). Humor Styles were measured by using the Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin et al., 2003). This scale has 32 items based on four subscales ($\alpha = 0.72-0.84$). The reliability values of the scales used in this research are 0.72 and 0.89. As indicated by various researchers (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Kline, 2000; Furr, 2011), a reliability of 0.70 is a least for a good test. The current values surpassed that norm.

Procedure

After adopting all type of ethical considerations the up-to-date permission was gained from the participants before administering the questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered individually and face to face. The data were analyzed by using the latest version of SPSS 30. Moderation hypotheses were tested via hierarchical regression, with interaction terms (Religiosity \times Personality \times Humor) added after controlling for main effects.

Results

Table 1

Inter-correlation between Religiosity, Well-being, Adaptive Humor, Maladaptive humor and Agreeableness (N=120)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1 Religiosity	--				
2 Well-being	.32**	--			
3 Adaptive Humor	.24*	.19*	--		
4 Maladaptive Humor	-.18*	-.29**	-.11	--	
5 Agreeableness	.16	.27**	.22*	-.34**	--

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 1 revealed that Religiosity is significantly correlated positively with well-being ($r = 0.32, p < 0.01$) and adaptive humor ($r = 0.24, p < 0.05$) but negatively correlated with maladaptive humor ($r = -0.18, p < 0.05$). Well-being has significant positive correlation with adaptive humor ($r = 0.19, p < 0.05$) and agreeableness ($r = 0.27, p < 0.01$) but significant negative correlation with maladaptive humor ($r = -0.29, p < 0.01$). Adaptive humor has significant positive correlation with agreeableness ($r = 0.22, p < 0.05$). Maladaptive humor is significantly negatively correlated to agreeableness ($r = -0.34, p < 0.01$).



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Table 2

Stepwise Multiple Regression Results

Models	Christians			Muslims		
	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
1-Religiosity (Moderator) × Agreeableness (Predictor) (Outcome: Well-being)	0.27**	0.452	12.24**	0.11	0.445	9.58**
2-Religiosity (Moderator) × Conscientiousness (Predictor) (Outcome: Adaptive Humor)	0.10	0.503	10.22**	0.33**	0.423	10.24**
3-Religiosity (Moderator) × Neuroticism (Predictor) (Outcome: Maladaptive Humor)	-0.21**	0.674	11.12**	-0.40**	0.525	8.78**

Note. $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2 shows the results of three moderated regression models inspecting the interaction effects between personality traits and religiosity on psychological outcomes specifically well-being, adaptive humor, and maladaptive humor among Christian and Muslim participants.

- **Model 1** tested whether agreeableness moderated the relationship between religiosity and well-being. The interaction term was significant for Christians ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), explaining 45.2% of the variance in well-being ($R^2 = 0.452$, $F = 12.24$). This indicates that higher agreeableness improved the positive impact of religiosity on well-being in Christians. The same effect was weaker and non-significant among Muslims ($\beta = 0.11$, $R^2 = 0.445$).
- **Model 2** assessed the moderating role of conscientiousness on the relationship between religiosity and adaptive humor. Among Muslims, the interaction was significant and strong ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), showing that higher conscientiousness reinforced religiosity’s positive influence on adaptive humor ($R^2 = 0.423$, $F = 10.24$). For Christians, the effect was weaker and not significant ($\beta = 0.10$, $R^2 = 0.503$).
- **Model 3** explored whether neuroticism moderated the relationship between religiosity and maladaptive humor. The interaction was negative and significant in both groups, but stronger among Muslims ($\beta = -0.40$, $p < 0.001$) than Christians ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that religiosity buffered the negative humor tendencies linked to neuroticism, more so in Muslim participants. Overall, the table highlights how different personality traits interact with religiosity in shaping psychological outcomes, with notable cross-faith variations.

Discussion

The outcomes of this current study are stable with existing literature. This shows that personality traits have a wise influence on how religiousness is appropriately related and humor. The observed moderating effects emphasize that personality can increase or weaken these relationships depending on the context of faith, confirming the need to consider individual differences in religious psychology research (Kirkpatrick, 2005). Positive moderation of conscience among Christians reflects this characteristic and connection between behavioral regulations and adherence to religious practices, which can be sufficiently improved. While the role of consensus in Muslim use from a humor perspective can focus on harmony and community cultural focus, the counterproductive effect of neurosis on Jewish self-destructive humor closes complex emotional coping strategies communicated by religious values (Hackett et al., 2018).

Compatibility enhances the benefits of Christian religiousness and agrees with the practical worship practice of urban worship. For Muslims, conscience is a discipline-related feature, reinforcing adaptive humor that resonates with Islamic teachings about moderation (the stronger bulge of neurosis towards Muslim maladaptive humor can reflect the role of religion.



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Big Five Personality Features, Conscience, Emotional Stability (Mild Neurosis), Extra Version, Openness of Experiences with Different Relationships with Religion. Consistency, conscience, and emotional stability are positive along with intrinsic religiousness (internalized religious commitment), but extra versions and openness often have weak or insignificant critical connections. Consensus and conscience are also positively related to exogenous and personal religiousness (religious behavior for personal advantage), while openness can refer to external religion (social aspects of religion). Analyses at the facet level show that religiousness is associated with hypo impulsiveness (the neurotic aspect) and high altruism and compliance (the validity aspect), whereas spirituality is associated with openness with facets such as imagination and aesthetics. Personality traits influence religion. Religion refers to religiousness. Both personality and spirituality/religion contribute independently to the outcome of psychological health. Research in a variety of cultural contexts, including Muslim social and organisational environments, confirms these patterns and emphasizes the importance of personality and religion for predicting life satisfaction and stress levels. In summary, appropriateness, conscience, and emotional stability are important personality traits that are positively associated with religiousness and wells. Religion is improved in some cases well by promoting gratitude and religious commitment, and the strength of these effects varies depending on the individual religious status. Personality traits and religion contribute to improving psychological health and satisfaction with life.

Limitations and Suggestions

Although, there are many positive points in this current study. Whereas several researches evaluate religiosity with a sole item scale or self-rating scales but this research used a questionnaire with three other to assess the study variables. Likewise, the scales of this study has excellent reliability and standards in relation to criteria related to effectiveness. However, this study has few limitations.

1. Sample of participants was limited only to the Muslim and Christian graduate students.
2. Self-report prejudices and sample similarity restrain generalizability.
3. Being narrowed to a single area makes the results questionable.

In future research it would be more appropriate to study the other psycho social factors with these current study variables. This should enhance the generalizability of the results. Secondly, the new researchers should try to do qualitative research to measure these types of variables.

Conclusion

This cross-penalty highlights the crucial moderating role of personality in relations between religions, well and humor. Important findings show that personality traits such as integrity, tolerance, and neuroticism have different influences on these associations across religious traditions, providing a more subtle image of the interactions between individual differences and spirituality. In practice, this knowledge may affect targeted interventions aimed at improving competence within religious communities by considering personality profiles and their impact on religious commitment and humor styles. It also highlights the importance of personalized approaches for pastoral care, advice and community programs to promote mental health. Future research is encouraged to examine this dynamic in longitudinal and broader cultural settings to deepen understanding and applicability. Ultimately, recognizing the diversity of interactions between personality and belief enriches our understanding of complex human experiences in the interfaces of spirituality, psychology and social connection. This study highlights the important interactions of personality and religion in well design and adaptation of humor. By fighting mental health and nuance, mental health framework conditions can better support religiously different population groups.



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