

Religious Orientation

Concepts, Attitudes, and Actions



Introduction to Religious Orientation

- “The Grand Paradox”
 - Racial prejudice and church attendance
 - Yes or No attendance and prejudice
 - 20 of 25 studies indicated *curvilinear* relationship between prejudice and attendance.
 - (Gorsuch & Aleshire, 1974)
- Findings led to further exploration of “religious types”

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Religious Orientation Types

- Intrinsic Orientation
 - “Living one’s religion”
 - Reasons for being religion are mostly within the person.
 - Religious faith is often internalized and is the “master motive” for life.
 - Religion affects more areas of life than just the “religious aspects.”
 - Internal motivation, religion is an end itself.

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Religious Orientation Types

- **Extrinsic Orientation**
 - “Using one’s religion”
 - Reasons for being religious are mostly external to the person.
 - Religion is only one “guiding forces” in life
 - Religion is typically compartmentalized
 - Religion is used as a means for other ends

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Measuring Religious Orientation

- **Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)**
 - Allport & Ross (1967)
 - 20-item, self-report scale
 - 9 items measure Intrinsic Orientation
 - 11 items measure Extrinsic Orientation

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Sample Items: Intrinsic Orientation

“Quite often I have been keenly aware of the presence of God or the Divine Being.”

“Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.”

“I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.”

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Sample Items: Extrinsic Orientation

“The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.”

“A primary reason for my interest in religion is that my church is a congenial social activity.”

“Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to protect my social and economic well-being.”

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Measuring Religious Orientation

- **Uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional?**
 - I-E on a continuum
 - I-E as two dimensions that interact.
 - Matrix with four possible I-E combinations
 - Pure Intrinsic, Pure Extrinsic, Indiscriminately Proreligious, and Nonreligious.

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Orientation and Racial Prejudice

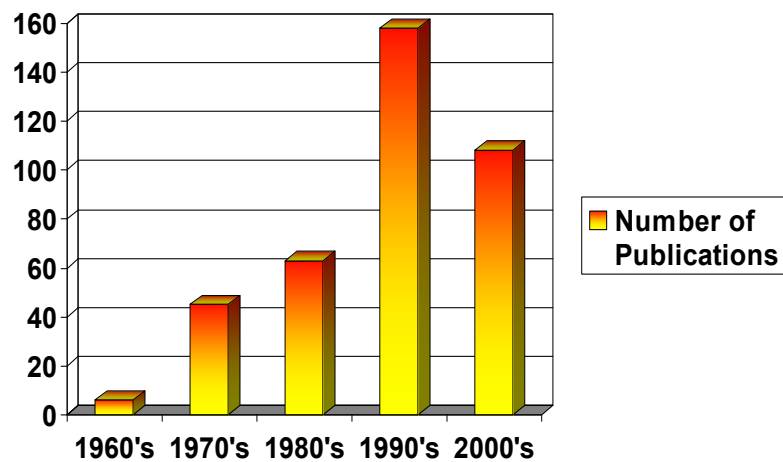
- **Allport & Ross (1967)**
 - Studied 309 churchgoers
 - Intrinsic: Lowest prejudice
 - Extrinsic: Higher Prejudice
 - I.P.: Highest Prejudice.

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Orientation and Purpose

- I-E and Purpose in Life.
 - Purpose in Life Test (PIL)
 - Participants grouped by religious orientation and then mean scores on the PIL were calculated.
 - Intrinsic
 - Extrinsic
 - Indiscriminately Pro-religious

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Publications on Religious Orientation found in PsychInfo

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Examples of Recent Research

- **Orientation and Prejudice**
 - Rowatt & Franklin (2004)
 - Implicit prejudice related . . .
 - negatively to Christian orthodoxy
 - positively to authoritarianism
 - nonsignificantly to orientation
- **Other**
 - Orientation and sexual experience
 - Orientation and vengeance

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Critiques of Religious Orientation

- Intrinsic orientation may be a reflection of social desirability bias rather than a truly intrinsic orientation.
- If this is true, how might you explain the results reviewed above?
- Can orientation be studied without the bias from socially-desirable responses?

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Critiques of Religious Orientation

- Religion-as-Quest

“I would like to beg you...to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love *the questions themselves* as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language...and the point is, to live everything. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.”

--Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

- not as a means to an end, but as an end itself.

“[Existential doubt] does not question whether a special proposition is true or false. It does not reject every concrete truth, but it is aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth.”

-Paul Tillich

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Religion-as-Quest

- Quest and Prejudice

- Quest orientation predicted lower levels of discrimination (prejudice in action) when white participants were given the opportunity to interact with a black individual

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Religion-as-Quest

- Good Samaritan Experiment

- Original Experiment (1973).

- 40 seminarians were sent to either give a presentation (a) on the story of the Good Samaritan or (b) on career opportunities for seminarians.
 - They were sent at three different speeds: hurry, moderate pace, no hurry at all.

- Quest and the Good Samaritan

- Quest orientation indicated what type of help an individual would give the “injured” confederate.

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Further Critiques

- The original I-E concept is biased

- Some suggest that Allport’s I-E measures a conservative intrinsic orientation, while Batson’s Q measures liberal intrinsic orientation.

- A clearer categorization?

- liberal intrinsic
 - liberal extrinsic
 - conservative intrinsic
 - conservative extrinsic

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Further Critiques

- The I-E concept artificially dichotomizes
 - The choice between ends and means is a narrow way to view religion.
 - Pargament (1992) suggested that both “using” and “living” one’s religion are important.
 - Separating the two is contrived and perhaps the most “religiously developed” are those that can balance both.

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Muslim Religious Orientation

- **Iranian Muslims** (Ghorbani et al., 2002)
 - **Similarities with US Christians**
 - Extrinsic correlated with psychological symptoms
 - Both samples
 - Intrinsic predicted healthy adjustment
 - With Iranian but not US sample
 - Support for RO factor structure in both samples

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Muslim Religious Orientation

- **Pakistani Muslims** (Khan, Watson, & Habib, 2005)
 - Some similar patterns of responses on RO
 - **Muslim Attitudes toward Religion**
 - Significantly related to Intrinsic RO
 - Intrinsic RO partially mediated the relationship between attitudes and adaptive empathy

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Buddhist Religious Orientation

- **Christian and Buddhist Elderly**
- (Tapanya, Nicki, & Jarusawad, 1997)
 - **Intrinsic related with less worry**
 - Self report and daily diary data
 - Extrinsic related to more worry
 - But only in the Buddhist sample

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References

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