A STUDY OF PERSONALITY CORRELATES OF SPIRITUALLITY AND RELIGIOSITY

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In the present day world, the emphasis on virtues as a source of human strength has a profound implication within the positive psychology movement. It provides a potential bridge between personality psychology, spiritual and religious studies.

The present study entitled “A study of Personality Correlates of Spirituality and Religiosity” is an attempt to understand the link between personality and spirituality; personality and religiosity and how spirituality is different from religiosity.

As personality shapes and is shaped by compelling forces of culture and is both a cause and consequence of society, societal trends are important sources of information for understanding personality. Spirituality and religiosity are integral part of human culture and as such, have the potential to shape individual lives and personalities and in turn personality psychology is ideally suited to stimulate progress in understanding what is central to human functioning. Spiritual and religious goals; beliefs and practices are not only a distinctive component of a person, for many they are the core of personality. Therefore, the study of relationship between personality traits and spiritual and religious attitudes can bring new insights to the research on personality, spirituality and religiosity.

The whole study is divided into six chapters. In chapter-I (introduction), variables incorporated in the study i.e. personality, spirituality and religiosity are
described in an elaborate manner, including meaning, concept, nature and historical perspective. Chapter-I also includes the research objectives and questions, in the light of which results are discussed. Operational definitions and conceptual framework of the variables incorporated in the study are also given in chapter-I.

In chapter-II, literature review regarding these variables is discussed. Chapter-III is concerned with methodology. In this chapter, the methodology adopted for research work is discussed, regarding research design, selecting standardized tools, choosing appropriate sample through suitable sampling technique, understanding sound procedure for collecting data, tabulating the data and analysis of data by means of suitable statistical technique.

Sample comprised of 385 subjects, 185 males and 200 females. It is further divided on the basis of religion (Hindus and Muslims). There are 85 Hindu males, 100 Hindu females, 100 Muslim males and 100 Muslim females.

The tools employed for collecting the data include the NEO-FFI developed by McCrae and Costa (1992); Spirituality Assessment scale developed by Howden (1992) and Religiosity Scale by Deka and Broota (1985). The data is analyzed by using Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Movement Correlation.

In chapter-IV, results are given. The results are discussed under three headings. (i) Relationship between five factors of personality and spirituality (ii) Relationship between five factors of personality and religiosity. (iii) Relationship between spirituality and religiosity.
The results reveal that openness to experience significantly determines spirituality in the whole sample, as statistical value \((t=4.20, p<0.001)\). In males, the same dimension of personality i.e., openness to experience emerged as a significant predictor of spirituality as ‘t’ value \((t=3.574, p<0.001)\).

In females, openness to experience and agreeableness is found to be significant predictors of spirituality as t value \((t=4.94, p<0.05\) and \(t=3.34, p<0.05\)) respectively are found to be significant.

Taking into account the religion, it is found that in Hindu males and females, openness to experience predicts spirituality as revealed by significant t-values \((t=2.693, p<0.01\) in Hindu males; and \(t=4.416, p<0.01\) in Hindu females).

Results reveal that in both Muslim males and females openness to experience and conscientiousness have their predictive influence on spirituality as their corresponding statistical t-values \((t=5.531\) and \(t=4.451\)) respectively in Muslim males and \((t=2.688\) and \(t= 2.217\)) in Muslim females are significant beyond 0.05 level of confidence.

In the second segment, relationship between five factors personality and religiosity is highlighted. The results obtained are more varied.

In the whole sample, agreeableness and conscientiousness influence religiosity as indicated by t-values \((t=3.785, p<0.01\) and \(t= 2.778, p<0.01\)) respectively.

In males, agreeableness \((t=4.148, p<0.01\) and conscientiousness \((t=3.196, p<0.01\) depicts religiosity.
In females, agreeableness \((t=2.657, p<0.001)\) and conscientiousness \((t=2.391, p<0.001)\) are the real predictors of religiosity.

In Hindu males, neuroticism \((t=3.147, p<0.05)\) and conscientiousness \((t=2.224, p<0.05)\) are found to influence religiosity.

In Hindu females, openness to experience emerged as the sole predictor of religiosity as obtained \(t\) value \((t=2.294, p<0.01)\) is significant.

In Muslim males, agreeableness \((t=6.296, p<0.001)\) and conscientiousness \((t=3.818, p<0.001)\) emerged to influence religiosity.

In Muslim females, agreeableness \((t=3.382, p<0.001)\) is found to influence religiosity.

As far as the relationship between spirituality and religiosity is concerned, there is no significant correlation between the two constructs in the whole sample, in males and females, in Hindu males, Muslim males and females as indicated by \(r\) value \((0.12; 0.13; 0.15; 0.17; 0.16; 0.10)\) respectively. However, significant correlation is found in Hindu females \((r=0.579, p<0.01)\).

Chapter V deals with discussion and conclusion. In this chapter, results obtained are discussed in the light of the experimental studies. The results of the present study shed light on which personality traits are the real predictors of spirituality and religiosity when gender and religion are included. Moreover, the results also suggest that spirituality and religiosity being different from each other but there is some similarity between the two.
Chapter VI deals with implications and suggestion for the future research. The in-depth study of the variables will help us to make a better understanding of how to improve the living conditions of human beings by means of values and qualities which are imbibed in each individual. Different persons differ in the levels of spirituality and religiosity. The better understanding of the variables can be used to improve the condition of world affairs and lives of people which is detracting day by day.

In this chapter, relevant suggestions for future research are also put forward by the investigator.