

Effects of Mysticism on Personality Development

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Abstract:

The current research focused on exploring the effects of mysticism on personality development between the followers and non-followers of the mysticism, residents in the division Faisal Abad Punjab, Pakistan. Participants of (N=120) followers (n=60) male and non-followers (n=60) male. Followers and non-followers were selected on the set criteria based on the five screening questions and Five factor inventory developed by the Paul, Costa, Robert & McCrae (1985), in order to measure five domains of personality i.e. Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness These were used to measure the effects of mysticism on personality development. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and independent sample t-test were used for statistical analysis. The results of this study supported the findings of earlier studies. Results of this research indicated a significant correlation on the four domains of personality whereas, there is negative correlation on the Neuroticism the fifth domain of personality on (FFI). The results of t- test indicated that there was significant difference between the followers and non-followers of mysticism on the five domains of personality. However this study additionally indicated that there are positive effects of mysticism on personality development.

Key words: Mysticism, Followers, Non followers, Personality

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Introduction

Every religion comes in the world with the message of love, equality, contentment and peace. It is the main obligation of every religion to reform the humanity in worldly affairs and hereafter (Jeelani 2000).

Religion Islam is a complete code of life. There are two aspects of Islam. One is the apparent (extrovert) and the second one is intrinsic (esoteric); the extrovert aspect or the apparent activities is named “Shariat” religious laws, while the esoteric aspect is named “Tariqat”. The esoteric aspect of Islam is called mysticism (Muhammad 2001).

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the compendium of the extrovert and esoteric procedures and both the methods have emanated from him. About “Shariat” (religious laws) and (Tariqat) esoteric path, the Holy prophet (P.B.U.H) said: “Shariat” is the name of my sayings and Tariqat is the name of my deeds, actions” (Ghazali 1995).

The construction of the man is twofold, like (soma) body and soul. Soma is apparent while soul is hidden and intrinsic. Mysticism deals with the esoteric side of religion, this side of religion bestows the humanity satisfaction, solace of heart, peace of mind, spiritual composure and normal stander of living, God the Mot High says: “God never sees the actions and figures but intentions.” (Hajveri 2000).

The modern man has achieved the comfort of life and luxuries of life through the help of advancement of science. But on the other side, in spite of these luxuries of life, man has become the victim of extreme spiritual vexation, frustration of mind sorrows and uncertainty. The advancement of science is unable to resolve or cure these ailments. Mysticism has the ability to remove the internal conflicts, frustrations and dissatisfaction (Muhammad 2001).

People have different levels for the understanding of religion; according to their thinking and mental approach, most

of the people require, for the fulfillment of their worldly needs, to have an utilitarian approach towards religion, the level of their religious desire and requirement according to their needs and desires. This is the lower level but on the other hand there is a higher level of consciousness, the aesthetic consciousness and the visionary consciousness.

The aesthetic consciousness is based on beauty and the visionary level is based on the world as unknowable. There is another higher level of consciousness, which is the mystic consciousness, the basic concept of mystic consciousness being love, a universal love which changes the concept, thinking pattern, mental approach, self-concept and develops the personality of person and his/her experience about life (Marshall 2005).

The intellectual domain of Muslim thoughts consists of three main disciplines: theology, philosophy and mysticism. Muslim mysticism is not an academic discipline but a pattern of life also (Qutbi 1995).

The originality of mysticism is based on the word Ehsan. The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) described the meaning of the word (Ehsan): to worship Allah as you see him - if not, then imagine Allah is seeing you. To keep your heart reserved only for Allah not for anyone else. The heart must be busy every time for the will of Allah - this is the real base of Ehsan and this is the main spirit of mysticism. Mysticism is the total sum of Shariat, Maarifat, Tareeqat and Haqeeqat. (Sayyal 2000).

The different definitions about mysticism concluded that mysticism is the way that leads a man to enter in his inner self, to know about himself to overcome the deficiency of his self and become more powerful by controlling his worldly desires and spending his life according to the preaching of his preceptor. Only then will he attain the esoteric realities and will find the Gnosis of Allah Almighty. (Lings 1983).

A person who follows mysticism becomes polite and become pious from every sin and bad deeds, because mysticism

has the ability to remove all negative aspects and bad deeds from human life. This purification is impossible without the help of Murshid (Spiritual preceptor) because every art cannot be learnt without the help and under the supervision of the master of that art (Ghazali 1995). The Love of God removes all fear, greed, worries and disturbances from man (Rumi 1998).

Will of God - when the love for God becomes stable in man, then the establishment of divine love leads the man towards God's will. The highest and most remarkable blessing in this world is God's will.

Gnosis of God - This element of Islamic mysticism opens the secrets of divine knowledge. In this stage the veil lifts itself, then the man observes realities (Chishti 2002).

Personality is the totality of human behavior. Every person has specific habits and the formation of these specific habits are combined with the birth tendencies and the forces of environment. A person's desires, tendencies, motivations and attitude, all are aspects of human personality (Alvi 1996).

Personality is so vast in its global concept, having several meanings. It is a set of behavior traits, secondly it may be constructed as the conscious self, thirdly it can be a person's mask, and the fourth meaning may be a person's total impact that he has on the people whom he meets or with whom interact (Bruno 1986).

It is necessary to know about the character, temperament and self-image since these are also fully involved in the human personality in different manners (Hurlock 1974). The unique system of personal traits is called character, the word character representing the ethical aspect of the personality (Lysy 1983). The term temperament represents the emotional system of the individual personality and the way someone expresses his/her emotion off and on. (McKinney 1971).

For the actual study of personality it is important to find out the basic traits which are the source of personality

development and personality builds up by these traits. Trait is a permanent attribute of any one's personality which is performed by him in different situations and in different occasions (Groof 2001).

There are three stages in acquiring the traits and give them proper name. In the first stage, with the help of observation, specific attributes of any one's behavior can be found out. For instance we observe that a person shows aggression and consistency in his daily routine work (Roberts 2004).

The Holly Quran has divided the human personality in three parts.

Nafs-Ay-Ammara deals with the fulfillment of desires, with the viciousness and bad deeds. This parts wants the completion of desire in no time. Nafay-Ay-Ammara amends the desires of the first part and try to make them according to moral and religious values. Nafs-Ay-Mutmaenna, at any cost, orders about good deeds, justice and against viciousness and against all the immoral and religious desires (Ajmal 1988).

There are three factors which are involved in the development of a person, such as the cognitive, the physical and the social. In cognitive development, systematic changes take place in the person with the help of his mental actions, functions and thinking process and it is related with the mental development. Cognitive development consists of memory, thinking, insight and creation - these are all supreme mental actions. In other words, we can say it is an intellectual development. In the physical development there comes the physical changes in the body of the person and experts of physical development divide this development in eight stages (Alvi 1996).

Personality can develop with the help of improving one's self image, improving self-esteem, improving confidence, improving feelings and thoughts which are negative in a person about him, improving abilities and qualities, improving social

learning and psychological and intellectual life. Most of the sick personalities have negative and irrational thoughts about their own self (Papalia 1981).

Personality development has been a major topic of interest for some of the most prominent thinkers in psychology. Many theorists developed theories to describe various stages and steps on the road of personality development. The following theories are about the various aspects of personality development including social, cognitive and moral development (Coe 2012).

The theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget remains one of the most frequently cited in psychology, despite being subjected to considerable criticism. He also discussed in his theory different stages of cognitive development. According to him the ability of acquiring knowledge becomes improved with the age factor. He thinks that a child is not passive in his reaction to environmental stimuli; the child is the active constructor of his cognitive development, he focuses on the interaction between the maturation, learning and experiences. According to Piaget, a person has to make himself ready to acquire the development, but sometimes he does not achieve experiences in the time of decision, and these experiences are related with physical objects and with the education. Piaget has discussed the four stages of cognitive development, namely sensory motor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage (Roberts 2004).

2. Review of Literature

Jeanine Czaja-Mordon et al. (2010), described mysticism as the belief that a person can directly experience ultimate reality or God. He further described different researches by other researchers about science and mysticism who studied mysticism and its different devices and studied about their link with brain and other activities. These studies also refer to the

physiological and psychological changes that occur with the help of mystical devices such as meditation. He also described the researches which were conducted on the near death experience of those people who were very near to death and escaped, the types of changes occurred in their behavior and attitude after the near death experience.

Coe et al. (2012) narrated that mysticism is a fantastic and powerful doctrine. Now even extreme mystics have achieved well organized and established personality with the help of mystical practice, which is also necessary for their followers to develop their personality.

Matthew W. Johnson et al. (2011) at Johns Hopkins University conducted an experiment on how a dose of Hallucinogen Psilocybin can be the cause of measurable change in one of the personality trait for at least one year. The researcher concluded that mysticism has a great impact on the measurable change in personality trait rather than the use of drug, and suggested more that the mystical experience can be helpful against addiction and other life threatening factors.

Caird et al. (2011) related the survey applied on one hundred and fifteen subjects who completed Hood's M scale, a measure of reported mystical experience, and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, which measures introversion / extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, and a lie score. No significant correlations were found between mysticism and the scales of the EPQ, nor could mysticism be predicted by multiple regression.

Mathew (2011), in his articles, described that a large body of evidence, including longitudinal analyses of personality change, suggests that core personality traits are predominantly stable after age 30. To our knowledge, no study has demonstrated changes in personality in healthy adults after an experimentally manipulated discrete event. Intriguingly, double-blind controlled studies have shown that the classic

hallucinogen psilocybin occasions personally and spiritually significant mystical experiences that predict long-term changes in behaviors, attitudes and values. In the present report we assessed the effect of psilocybin on changes in the five broad domains of personality – Neuroticism, Extroversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Consistent with the participant claims of hallucinogen-occasioned increases in aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and creativity, we found significant increases in Openness following a high-dose of psilocybin session. In participants who had mystical experiences during their psilocybin session, Openness remained significantly higher than baseline, more than one year after the session. The findings suggest a specific role for psilocybin and mystical-type experiences in adult personality change.

Larry Laveman et al. (2011) conducted a research on the students of secondary level, having in view their knowledge and tendency towards Islamic education and knowledge. The data were obtained by means of interview and questionnaire and she concluded that there are observable behavioral problems and poor personality is seen in secondary level students. So it is the duty of parents to guide them according to the Islamic education so that their children may achieve good and adjusted personality.

According to Marshall (2005), neuro-psychiatric researches are exploring the effects of mysticism by researching the spiritual experience as it affects brain chemistry, and these researches deal with how mysticism emerges in the lives of people and how it leaves its impact on the human personality and his normal functioning. Researches also have the interest to find out how the mystical stages might be achieved.

Kris (2008), involved in private clinical practice since 1995, concluded that she often uses mystical knowledge in the session with the client and she uses this knowledge most of the time with most of her patients, feeling that mystical approaches must be widely used for the purpose of psychotherapy. Required

results can be obtain by using mystical knowledge in therapeutic sessions. She further concluded that the clients often feel more empowered and ready to handle their life with a sense of joy and pleasure with the help of mystical knowledge.

Thomas (1996) collected the data of 222 clergy who completed on Eysenck personality questionnaire and found that there is a strong relationship between mysticism and extroversion and there is no relationship between mysticism and psychotics and neurotics.

3. Objective of the study:

To explore the impact of mysticism on human personality.

4. Hypotheses:

- There would be a difference on Neuroticism between the followers and non-followers.
- There would be a difference on Extraversion between the followers and non-followers.
- There would be correlation between the scores of followers and openness to experience.
- There would be correlation between the scores of non-followers and Agreeableness.
- There would be correlation between the scores of non-followers and Conscientiousness.

5. Materials and Methods

5.1 Sample

The sample size of the study was (N = 120) followers male (n=60) and the non-followers male (n=60). The minimum age of sample was 18 years and the minimum qualification was matriculation.

5.2 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used for sample selection. The sample was selected from the shrines of mystic, madrasas, mosques and other Islamic institutions. Data was collected from participants by telling them about the purpose of the study and with their permissions and in the Islamic institutions data was collected with the permission of concerned authorities.

5.3 Research Design

The present study was based on the comparative research design.

5.4 Research Instrument

The following instruments were used in the present study (Set Criteria) for the saturation of followers and non-followers.

Criteria were set for the saturation of followers and non-followers of mysticism on the basis of (5) questions (screening checklist). Every question in this criteria had (2) marks and the total score was (10). Those who obtained (4) or less than (4) score were included in the non-followers category and those who obtained (6) or more than (6) were selected in the followers category. The answer of every question was in (Yes) and in (No) option.

NEO- Five Factor Inventory (Neo-FFI).

Paul Costa and Robert McCrae developed the neo-five-factor inventory in 1985. They developed this inventory to measure the five domains of personality i.e. Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness and conscientiousness. The reliability of five domains in Neo five factor inventory is ranged from .79 to .83 and conscientiousness has highest reliability among all.

6. Procedure

In order to assess the effects of mysticism between the followers

and non-followers of mysticism both were Muslims, a Set criteria based on the five questions (screening checklist) was developed with maximum score (10), and Neo- FFI Five factor inventory by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae with the (60) total items were used. In this study set criteria based on questionnaire were used to sort out the followers and the non-followers of the mysticism and the Neo FFI was used to measure the effects of mysticism on personality development with the help of five domains namely, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

6.1 Statistics

Keeping in view the objectives of the study the appropriate statistical analysis ie, t- test through SPSS and Pearson correlation methods were used to get the results.

7. Results

Hypothesis 1 There would be a difference on Neuroticism between the followers and non-followers.

Table 1 Neuroticism t test

Followers			Non Followers		
n=60			n=60		
M	SD	M	SD	t	p
23.083	4.731	35.450	7.740	-10.559	.000
df=118					

It is observed that the difference between the followers and non-followers on t-test (Neuroticism) and the significance level ($p < .05$), indicates that there is a highly significant difference between the Neuroticism of the followers and the non-followers.

Hypothesis 2 There would be a difference on Extraversion between the followers and non-followers.

Table 2 Extraversion t test

Followers			Non Followers		
n=60			n=60		
M	SD	M	SD	t	p
46.383	7.755	35.300	3.366	10.155	.000
df=118					

It is observed that the difference between the followers and non-followers on t-test (Extraversion) and the significance level ($p < .05$) indicates that there is a highly significant difference between the Extraversion of the followers and the non-followers.

Hypothesis 3 There would be correlation between the score of followers and openness.

	R	n	p
Follower S. Openness	.791	60	.000

$p^* < 0.05$

Table 3 Correlation

It is observed that the correlation between the follower's scores and Openness ($r = .791$ $n = 60$, $p = .000$) indicates that there is a highly significant correlation between the Openness and the followers scores.

Hypothesis 4 There would be correlation between the score of non-followers and Agreeableness

	R	n	p
N followers S. Agreeableness	-.805	60	.000

$p^* < 0.05$

Table 4 Correlation

It is observed that the correlation between the non-follower's scores and Agreeableness ($r = -.805$ $n = 60$, $p = .000$) indicates that there is a negative correlation between the Agreeableness and the non-followers scores.

Hypothesis 5 There would be correlation between the score of non-followers and Conscientiousness.

	R	n	P
N Follower S. Conscientiousness	-.758	60	.000

$p^* < 0.05$

Table 5 Correlation

It is observed that the correlation between the non- followers' scores and Conscientiousness ($r = -.758$ $n = 60$, $p = .000$) indicates that there is a negative correlation between the Consciousness and the non- followers scores.

7. Discussions

Hypothesis 1 states that there would be a difference on Neuroticism between the followers and non-followers.

The hypothesis was tested by using the t-test on Neuroticism between the followers and non-followers and the result indicated that there was highly significant difference between the followers and non-followers of the mysticism. Followers obtained less score and the non-followers score was high on this domain of personality as well as there was difference in their mean and SD score. Neuroticism is a negative personality domain, the fewer score on this indicates that persons have less neurotic traits in their personality rather than others. Mathew (2011) concluded that Mystical therapy gives multiple benefits. It is highly therapeutic to one's physical body, mind and soul. It reaches a very deep level of an individual consciousness. It is a spiritual force of pure love. Therefore it relates to all persons. Mystic therapy's goal is to aid an individual's achievement of an internal change that will affect positively his way of life and the way of living, improving it and harmonizing it in all its dimensions: physical, mental and spiritual.

Hypothesis 2 states that there would be a difference on

Extraversion between the followers and non-followers.

The hypothesis was tested by using the t-test on Extraversion between the followers and non-followers and the result indicated that there was a highly significant difference between the followers and non-followers of the mysticism. Followers obtained high score and the non-followers less score than the followers as well as there was difference in their mean and SD score. Extraversion is a positive personality domain, the high score on this indicating that a person has much more quality rather than others. Results are given in the Table 2.

Hypothesis 3 states that there would be correlation between the score of followers and openness.

It was observed that the correlation between the followers' scores and Openness indicates that there is a highly significant correlation between the Openness and the followers' scores. The results are given in Table 8. Nixon (1983), concluded that the meditation is the main device of the Mysticism, purifying the thoughts of the person and bringing his thoughts towards the reality and the reality providing self-actualization. As a result, the personality becomes more powerful and healthy by the help of meditation.

Hypothesis 4 states that there would be correlation between the score of non-followers and Agreeableness.

It was observed that the correlation between the non-followers' scores and Agreeableness indicates that there is a high correlation between the Agreeableness and the non-followers scores, as the results shown in Table 14. Jeelani (2000) described that nature of mysticism is that it is a curiosity, it is love and it is a wish that remains in the heart of the person that he must meet with God (Allah Almighty) and this love, curiosity and wish overcomes his whole emotional and intellectual life. When he talks he keeps God in his mind, he remembers only God, he wishes only God, he perceives God in

every object of life, and his mind becomes free from the conflicts of worldly objects due to the nearness of God (Allah Almighty).

Hypothesis 5 states that there would be a correlation between the score of non-followers and Conscientiousness.

It was observed that the correlation between the non-followers' scores and Conscientiousness indicates that there was a high correlation between the Conscientiousness and the non-followers scores, as the result in Table 15. Wasif (2001) described that a spiritual leader is a person who has the pure and honest love, who has the intuition, who has the observation of universe and nature, who has the belief in God (Allah Almighty) who has the faith, who has the spiritual relation, who has the intrinsic and spiritual knowledge, who has the ability to change the other person's inner life with the help of his spiritual power. He must have the ability to build up the personality of his follower.

8. Conclusion

The current study concludes that the mysticism has positive effects on the development of personality. The reason behind this is that the follower of mysticism remains under the guidance and supervision of his mystic and his training process regarding his daily life remains continuous along with the religious and spiritual training as well.

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