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An Investigation into the Relationship between Personality Transcendence Dimensions with the HEXACO Model of Personality Structure

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A B S T R A C T

The main purpose of the current research was to investigate the relationship between personality transcendence dimensions with the HEXACO model of personality structure which is a six-dimensional model of human personality. Using multi stage cluster sampling, 180 students from Persian Gulf University were selected. The participants were asked to complete Personality Transcendence Scale and the HEXACO Personality Inventory. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and Multi-variable Regression. The results revealed that personality transcendence has positive correlation with five dimensions of the HEXACO model, but negative correlation with the emotionality dimension. The findings also indicated that, among the personality transcendence dimensions, the best predictors for the HEXACO model of personality structure are: individual moral and social moral for Honesty-Humility; individual order and emotional maturity for Extraversion; individual moral and spiritual experiences for Agreeableness; individual order, individual moral, and religious behaviors for Conscientiousness; individual moral, spiritual experiences, and spiritual behaviors for Openness to Experience; and emotional maturity and religious beliefs as the best inverse predictor of Emotionality. Regarding with the positive relations between personality transcendence dimensions with personality factors, personality transcendence could be considered as a new perspective on personality.

Keywords: Transcendence, Self, Personality, Structure.

INTRODUCTION

People behave in various ways, from socially acceptable to unacceptable behaviors, and rational to irrational behaviors. The art of good living is beyond behaving based on social situations and conditions, it also depends on what we call Personality traits. Although every person is unique, there are many similarities between a group of people as well as differences between different groups of people. Although psychologist believe in similarities between people but, their attention is paid more to the differences between individuals.

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Personality consists of sustainable and unique traits of each individual. From the perspective of psychologists, personality consists of a somehow sustainable pattern of behavioral manners and specifications and one's quality of being adaptable which has two characteristics of individuality and similarity, and distinct him from others¹. Personality not only consists of unique patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior, but also comprises hidden or revealed psychological mechanisms behind which patterns lie; these unique traits and patterns may not be seen directly, or one might be likely to hide them deliberately². Generally, personality is a stable and unique features that may change in response to different situations³. Because of personality complexity, there hasn't been still a single answer to the question: "what is personality and what are its dimensions?" However, based on a series of studies concerning creation, genesis, and change in personality, and also from the personality theories it can be concluded that psychologists have believed in various dimensions for personality. Some⁴ believe that personality is a multi-dimensional concept that can be simply classified in four parts: Abilities, traits, motives, and narrations. Abilities are things that people can do; traits reflect usual ways of people's thinking, feeling, and behavior; motives are indeed what people are inclined to and wish; narrations are special stories of people's life. Recent studies conducted based on lexical hypothesis have come to the conclusion that the best description of personality based on words needs to categorize personality traits into a model of five factors, known as the Big Five Factors Model (FFM). These big five factors are: neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In later studies, another (the sixth) factor was also added to these factors which is called honesty-humility⁵. Adding sixth dimension was considered as one of the most important features of the HEXACO model.

The willingness of communities to spirituality as one dimension of personality or as one of the most important predictors of personality traits is increasing. Determining how religiosity is related to the important dimensions of human personality is a significant starting point to improve relationship between personality psychology and scientific study of religion. Despite the fact that religion and spirituality have been the interests of personality psychologists, such as Gordon Allport and Henry Murray, but they have been to some extent ignored and marginalized. However, personality psychology is an important and scientific channel to study religion and spirituality.

Since spirituality and religiosity are fundamental dimensions in human life, it seems that psychologists must know more about the religious dimension of personality in order to know human better. During the last decade, some researchers have investigated the relationship between individual differences in religiosity and their differences in personality traits. From the initial human creation, spirituality has formed an important part of human life. People showed their spirituality in relation with God, something that is beyond their everyday life

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and gives meaning to life. Piedmont⁶ suggested spirituality concept as a personality agent. He showed in his studies that besides the five big factors of personality, we can also refer to a sixth factor that is called spirituality.

Spiritual transcendence is a concept that refers to spiritual dimension of human, and is considered as a personality trait related to human spiritual experience. This concept is influenced by the theories of personality development in humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Frankel considers transcendence as a desire of human to find meaning in life⁷. Maslow suggested transcendence as the highest and most comprehensive level of human consciousness in behavior and human communications⁸. Self-transcendence refers to considering self and the universe as a whole⁹. Self-transcendence is known as a personality structure, and a pattern of psychological growth. According to Cloninger¹⁰, Self-transcendence could leading to respect, honor, effectiveness, leadership, hope, mercy, and tendency to do charitable affairs. Self-transcendence in a more general framework represents the individual's ability to avoid psychological distress, and it leads to creativity, spirituality, and intellect¹¹.

Banner defined Self-transcendence by integrating theology and psychology¹². He argued that, human being is a mental-spiritual creature, and human's willingness for Self-transcendence is at the heart of spiritual experiences and is as a means that leads individuals beyond themselves (not only towards other people, but even higher than them). This definition has three aspects of self, others, and God. Totally, Self-transcendence has three basic aspects of contemplation, introspection, and spirituality. Spirituality that includes religion and relationship with God is the closest construct to Self-transcendence¹³.

Reed¹⁴ describes Self-transcendence as expanding internal and external boundaries, death acceptance, and relationship with God, integrating past and future at the present time. He defines spirituality as a human pattern which can lead to Self-transcendence. He also defined Self-transcendence as a "characteristic of developmental maturity wherein there is enhanced awareness of the environment and an orientation towards broader life perspectives"¹⁵. Self-transcendence in Reed theory means expanding self-boundaries through some activities such as introspective activities (through self-acceptance and finding meaning in life), activity focused on the outside (through communication with others and environment, and attention to the welfare of others), activities focused on understanding time physiognomy (collecting and developing the present through understanding past and future), and individual connection to a higher dimension.

According to Cloninger¹⁶, Self-transcendence, in a more general framework, shows the individual's ability to avoid mental distresses and it leads to creativity, spirituality, and intellect. People who are high at self-transcendence are ready to have peak experiences and to accept all life events. They are faithful, self-possessed, patient, and idealize, and they believe in extrasensory experiences. The

foundation of all the definitions related to self-transcendence is the relation with God (religion and spirituality), other people, and nature.

Pakizeh¹⁷, by arguing that personality encompasses all aspects of individual's life, and that the concept of personality is much more inclusive than the concept of self, introduced the term of personality transcendence and defined it as a dynamic system of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors which organized based on religious, spiritual, and moral values. He also introduced nine dimensions for self-transcendence namely; personal discipline, religious beliefs, religious behaviors, emotional maturity, spiritual beliefs, spiritual behaviors, personal morals, social morals, and peak experiences.

The research shows that, in the six -factor model of personality, the dimensions such as honesty-humility, compatibility, and conscientiousness have positive relation with religiosity, and honesty –humility factor is the strongest personality factor that is correlated with religiosity [5]. Also, in five-factor model of personality, spirituality has also a positive correlation with positive personality traits (for example, extraversion), and a negative correlation with negative personality traits (psychoneurosis) ^{18, 19}. The relation between spiritual intelligence and extraversion, openness, and agreeableness is significantly positive; but the relation between spiritual intelligence and neuroticism is significantly negative. The spiritual intelligence can also predict personality character of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness²⁰.

Spirituality and religiosity are largely associated with conscientiousness²¹ and spirituality is an effective moderator for everyday life stresses²². Religious beliefs have a significant negative correlation with neuroticism, but positive correlation with extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. These beliefs could also predict neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness ^{23, 24}. Personality and spirituality determine a considerable part of forgiving oneself and others¹⁶. There is a significant relationship between transcendence with openness to experience, extroversion, and conscientiousness. Moreover, transcendence and neuroticism are negatively associated⁷.

Saroglou²⁵ also conducting a meta-analysis of personality and religion studies in various countries and literature, found that all the religious dimensions (religiosity, spirituality and fundamentalism) have positive correlation with agreeableness and conscientiousness. His finding also revealed that agreeableness and conscientiousness are as the general characteristics of a religious personality. The current study was conducted in order to investigate the relationship between different personality transcendence dimensions with the HEXACO six-factor model of personality. In other words, the main question of the study was if the personality transcendence construct and its dimensions could predict the personality traits in the six-factor model of personality?

METHODOLOGY

The current study is a descriptive correlation research, which investigates the relationship between personality transcendence's dimensions as predictors and the traits in HEXACO six-factor model of personality in students as the criterion variable. The statistical population includes all the Persian Gulf university students at 2014-2015 academic year who were studying at 6 faculties namely; engineering, humanities, architecture, agricultural, oil and gas, and basic sciences. As the first step of multistage cluster sampling, 3 faculties (engineering, humanities, and basic sciences) out of 6 faculties were selected randomly.

As the second step, two majors were selected from each faculty. Then one of the classes from each major was selected as the final cluster. After receiving a general and non-directive explanation on research, the participants (180 students) were asked to fill out the scales. The instruments that were completed in self-report form, in this research were:

Pakizeh Scale of Personality Transcendence (PSPT). This scale includes 64 items, which measures nine dimensions including personal discipline (8 items, eg, usually I have a regular sleeping and waking schedule), religious beliefs (5 items, eg, I believe in God), religious behaviors (4 items, eg, I say prayer regularly), emotional maturity (12 items, eg, usually I understand very well that why I am experiencing a certain emotion and feeling), spiritual beliefs (5 items, eg, I believe that there is a supernatural world beyond this physical world), spiritual behaviors (5 items, eg, I usually think about beauty of nature), individual moralities (8 items, eg, For my personal benefits, I lie easily (converse scoring), social moralities (9 items, eg, whenever I can, I make a donation to the poor people), and peak experiences (8 items, eg, sometimes when saying prayer , I feel a peak joy). Content validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using the experts' opinions and criterion-related validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using several similar scales. In other words, the correlation between Pakizeh Scale of Personality Transcendence (PSPT) with other scales namely; The Spirituality Questionnaire, General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28), The Quality of Life Instrument, The Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory, Honesty questionnaire, were 0.61, 0.56, 0.54, 0.53, and 0.56 respectively. Reliability of the scale was investigated using test-retest correlation coefficient in different samples and the correlations were obtained between 0.79 and 0.84^{17, 26}. The internal-consistency reliability of the measure in the current study was investigated and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.92.

Six-Factor Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI-R). The Farsi version of the short form of this scale that includes 60 items was conducted in the current study. This inventory measures six factors of personality namely; honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experiences. Each factor includes four scales and each scale has 8 questions. This inventory had been prepared by Lee and Ashton (2000); reliability and validity of this inventory have been confirmed in several studies²⁷. The reliability and validity

of Farsi version of this inventory have been investigated and confirmed by Boragihzadeh²⁸. The participants in the current research were asked to the degree of agreement-disagreement for each item using a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has good reliability and validity in Iran. All subscales of this inventory had showed a high internal reliability based on six factors that was assumed, and sufficient convergent validity with external variables. The internal-consistency reliability of the measure in the current study was investigated and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.76.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics including mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for 9 personality transcendence subscales and six subscales of HEXACO Personality Inventory are reported in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (M & SD) PSPT and HEXACO subscales

Main scales	Sub scales	M	SD
Pakizeh Scale of Personality Transcendence	Personal discipline	26.96	6.87
	Religious beliefs	21.64	4.94
	Religious behaviors	14.11	4.68
	Emotional maturity	41.21	7.73
	Spiritual beliefs	21.69	4.11
	Spiritual behaviors	17.71	4.24
	Individual moralities	27.69	7.88
	Social moralities	33.66	6.62
	Peak experiences	27.95	7.52
Six-Factor Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI-R)	Honesty	33.67	5.11
	Emotionality	33.88	6.81
	Extraversion	32.78	6.09
	Agreeableness	32.13	5.47
	conscientiousness	32.16	5.01
	Openness	31.30	5.46

Table 2 shows the within correlations of personality transcendence dimensions and Six-Factor Personality Inventory, and also the correlation between the two scales.

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Table 2. Simple Correlations between and within personality transcendence dimensions and personality traits

	Personal	Religious beliefs	Religious	Emotional	Spiritual beliefs	Spiritual	Individual	Social moralities	Peak experiences	Honesty	Emotionality	Extraversion	Agreeableness	conscientiousness	Openness
Personal discipline	1	0.36**	0.45**	0.40**	0.33**	0.42**	0.33**	0.39**	0.37**	0.11	-0.34**	0.45**	0.15*	0.53**	0.13
Religious beliefs		1	0.74**	0.25**	0.55**	0.28**	0.38**	0.32**	0.37**	0.28**	-0.25**	0.11	0.11	0.22**	0.13
Religious behaviors			1	0.25**	0.47**	0.43**	0.34**	0.39**	0.61**	0.23**	-0.20**	0.15*	0.20**	0.33**	0.18*
Emotional maturity				1	0.16*	0.37**	0.22**	0.52**	0.26**	0.03	-0.46**	0.47**	0.14	0.28**	0.15*
Spiritual beliefs					1	0.46**	0.47**	0.50**	0.48**	0.33**	-0.06	0.17*	0.17*	0.28**	0.25**
Spiritual behaviors						1	0.37**	0.49**	0.48**	0.18*	-0.26**	0.23**	0.24**	0.31**	0.29**
Individual moralities							1	0.38**	0.25**	0.44**	-0.19*	0.21**	0.29**	0.41**	0.34**
Social moralities								1	0.49**	0.26**	-0.27**	0.28**	0.22**	0.32**	0.25**
Peak experiences									1	0.22**	-0.18*	0.15*	0.29**	0.15*	0.30**
Honesty										1	-0.11	0.03	0.15*	0.21**	-0.14
Emotionality											1	-0.21**	-0.19*	-0.18*	-0.16*
Extraversion												1	0.12	0.19*	0.19*
Agreeableness													1	0.16*	0.14
conscientiousness														1	0.13

**p<0.01 *p<0.05

As shown in table 2, there are significant correlations within personality transcendence dimensions, and also personality transcendence dimensions have significant correlations with all personality traits. In a more detailed words, honesty-humility is positively correlated with personality transcendence and its dimensions, except Personal discipline and emotional maturity. Emotionality is

negatively correlated with personality transcendence and its dimensions, except Spiritual beliefs. Also, as can be seen in table 2, other significant positive correlations are; correlation between extraversion with personality transcendence and all dimensions except religious beliefs, agreeableness with personality transcendence and the dimensions except religious beliefs and Emotional maturity, Conscientiousness with personality transcendence and all its dimensions, and finally openness with personality transcendence and the dimensions except Personal discipline and religious beliefs.

Using regression analysis, the predictive role of personality transcendence and its 9 dimensions for the six personality factors was investigated. The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Regression analysis for the predictive power of personality transcendence dimensions for personality traits

Criterion variable	R	R ²	Predictor variables	β	t	P
Honesty-humility	0.24	0.49	Individual moralities	0.48	4.48	0.000
			Social moralities	0.24	2.03	0.043
Emotionality	0.28	0.53	Social moralities	-0.31	-3.83	0.000
			Religious beliefs	-0.26	-2.36	0.019
			Personal discipline	-0.16	-2.11	0.036
Extraversion	0.33	0.57	Personal discipline	0.54	3.29	0.001
			Emotional maturity	0.62	3.13	0.002
Agreeableness	0.15	0.39	Individual moralities	0.31	2.64	0.009
			Peak experience	0.30	2.37	0.018
Conscientiousness	0.38	0.62	Personal discipline	0.58	5.36	0.000
			Individual moralities	0.44	4.19	0.000
			Religious behaviors	0.32	2.66	0.008
			Emotional maturity	0.23	2.04	0.042
Openness to experience	0.20	0.44	Individual maturity	0.42	3.33	0.001
			Peak experience	0.39	2.95	0.004
			Spiritual behaviors	0.19	1.98	0.049

As can be seen in table 3, among the personality transcendence dimensions, Individual moralities ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.48$) and Social moralities ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.43$) respectively are the strongest predictors for honesty; Emotional maturity ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = -0.31$), Religious beliefs ($p < 0.019$, $\beta = -0.26$) and Personal discipline ($p < 0.036$, $\beta = -0.16$) respectively, are the strongest reverse predictors for emotionality. Also, Individual discipline ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.54$) and Emotional maturity ($p < 0.002$, $\beta = 0.62$) are the best predictors for extraversion; Individual moralities ($p < 0.009$, $\beta = 0.31$) and Peak experience ($p < 0.018$, $\beta = 0.30$) are the best predictors for agreeableness; Personal discipline ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.58$), Individual moralities ($p < 0.000$, $\beta = 0.44$), Religious behaviors ($p < 0.008$, $\beta = 0.32$), and Emotional maturity ($p < 0.042$, $\beta = 0.23$) predict conscientiousness; and Individual moralities ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.42$), Peak

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experience ($p < 0.004$, $\beta = 0.39$), and Spiritual behaviors ($p < 0.049$, $\beta = 0.19$) are the strongest predictors for openness.

CONCLUSION

In order to examine the hypothesis which suggests there is a relationship between personality transcendence with the six-factor model of personality traits, Pearson correlation coefficient was used firstly. The result revealed significant correlation between personality transcendence with the six personality traits in HEXACO model. Moreover, regression analysis suggested personality transcendence domains as good predictors of the six personality traits. This finding is consistent with some other research findings^{5, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 25}. As mentioned earlier, Self-discipline is a meaningful and positive predictor of the personality traits conscientiousness and extroversion. To explain this finding we can refer to some of the conclusions which suggest the eminent power of prediction as to the self-discipline dimension for mental health and prevent mental disorders²⁹. The self-discipline dimension of personality transcendence suggests that a person can control and guide his or her actions and behaviors. This ability leads the person to behave well in social communication and relationships, which is a characteristic of extrovert people. Extroversion refers to a cluster of traits and is the state in which a person is energetic, social, bold, active, emotion-seeking, passionate, confident and positive. Extrovert people tend to be social, emotional, and friendly and easily deal with the people around them. Extroverts, at work, are of positive emotions and moods about their job, and are more satisfied, and usually feel better about the organization and environment they are in. Moreover, self-discipline can lead to organization which is one of the characteristics of conscientious people. Conscientiousness is always a criterion for evaluating reliability. A conscientious person, is a qualified, disciplined, ambitious, self-disciplined, loyal, on-time, and reliable. The main tendency of conscientious people is seeking success. Moreover, as per findings of this research, self-discipline is a negative predictor of emotionality. Emotionality refers to the low emotional stability. The individuals who get high score in emotionality, are nervous, unhappy, desperate, stressed, shy, vulnerable and hasty. These people have a negative attitude towards the surroundings. Whereas, a person who is able to organize his actions and behaviors and can control and guide oneself, will undergo less stress, anxiety and tension³⁰.

Religious beliefs are negative predictors of emotionality, and religious behavior is a positive predictor of conscientiousness trait. These findings are consistent with findings which suggest religious beliefs and tendencies lead to changes in personality and while decreasing the negative characteristics of personality, increases positive characteristics^{23, 24}. Moreover, these findings are consistent with the findings which suggest spirituality and religiousness are highly

related to conscience²¹. Some researchers also suggest that different forms of religiousness and spirituality are of a negative correlation with neuroticism and overall religiousness is in related to conscientiousness as spirituality and religiousness together can be considered as an important dimension of human personality³¹. Emotionality, which is accompany with characteristics such as worry, anxiety, insecurity, sadness, moodiness, anger, and irritability, is opposed to positive characteristics such as trust, gratitude and thanksgiving, mental health care, patience, kindness, tolerance, which are associated with religious beliefs. As mentioned before, the current research results revealed that emotional maturity is a positive predictor of extroversion and conscientiousness, and a reverse predictor of emotionality. To explain this finding, some findings can be noted that a person with emotional maturity is able to manage disturbing emotions, show stability, resist under pressure and release from nervous tendencies; and emotional maturity is a condition that a person can live peacefully with respect for differences, solve problems, express their opinions, establish and maintain good relationships with others ^{31, 32}. Also, some believe that having emotional maturity means being able to have a good assessment of social situations and doing proper behaviors to the situations³². Emotional maturity means respect for differences, solve problems, express ideas, establish and maintain peaceful relations with others. These are somehow the characteristics of extroverts. Extraversion includes features of expression, social boldness and vitality. Also, conscientiousness with encompassing features of adherence to ethical and careful thought partly corresponded with this aspect of ascendancy of character. People with personality trait of conscientiousness are efficient, competent, reasonable and logical in decision-making, well organized during life, reliable, and independent. Conscientious people tend to do their work efficiently, and ability to solve problems requires careful thought and reflection and a sense of responsibility. Ability to solve problems and peaceful communicate with other people can reduce anxiety, insecurity and so on in.

Personal moral is the predictor of honesty, humility, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience; and social moral is the predictor of honesty and humility. To explain this finding, we could refer to the literature suggesting that morality could ease interpersonal relations, causes more enjoyable relation between individual and nature, increase the tendency to helping others ³³. When people talk about morality (both individual and social) some features such as purity, neutrality, and humility come to mind. The traits that are included in HEXACO model. Honesty and humility are virtue which is considered by almost all religions ⁵. Peak experience is the positive predictor of agreeableness and openness to experience. These findings are consistent with findings suggesting

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that religious beliefs and meaning and purpose of life are associated with compatibility and conscientiousness ²³, and that peak experience is correlated with characteristics such as tolerance, helping others, creativity and social skills [30]. Peak experience which is a sense of unity and harmony with a sacred power and the whole universe, is highly related to the personality trait of agreeableness which is known by features such as trust, honesty, benevolence, compassion, kindheartedness, unselfishness ²⁵. In general it can be said that the findings of the current study could create a new perspective in personality psychology. In other words, we can say that personality transcendence is a new construct in personality psychology that could explain some other psychological concepts such as mental health, motivation, cognition, behavioral stability in different situations, socially accepted or antisocial behaviors, etc. Because of the novelty of the subject, research could focus on different aspects of the concept, and on recognizing the ways to help people to transcend their personality.

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