

Good without god? – The Influence of Religion on Altruistic Acts and Moral Disengagement.

Catherine Nolan

1273319

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the BA Hons in Psychology at Dublin

Business School, School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr. Chris Gibbons

Head of Department: Dr. Sinead Eccles

March 2014

Department of Psychology

Dublin Business School

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Introduction .....	4
The Origins of Moral Sense.....	4
Religious Influence.....	7
Moral Disengagement.....	10
Altruism and Prosocial Behaviour.....	12
Present Study.....	14
Methodology.....	17
Participants.....	17
Design.....	18
Materials.....	18
Procedure.....	20
Results.....	21
Discussion.....	25
References.....	32
Appendices.....	38
Influence of Religion on Altruistic Acts and Moral Disengagement Survey.....	38

### *Acknowledgements*

I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Chris Gibbons who has been a constant source of encouragement and advice. I would also like to express my gratitude to everyone who took the time to complete my survey, as without them this research would not have been possible.

A special thanks to my mother and Charlie, for everything.

***Abstract***

The purpose of this quantitative, between-groups study was to investigate the relationships and differences between different religious groups (Christian, Atheist, Agnostic, Lapsed and Other) and levels of Religiosity and whether they have an effect levels of Altruism, and Moral Disengagement and its eight subscales: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility, Distortion of Consequences, Attribution of Blame, and Dehumanisation. A survey was collected electronically from a sample population consisting of 103 males and 94 females aged from 18 to 66. Analysis of the data showed that there was a there was no significant differences between the religious groupings when it came to levels of Altruism and Moral Disengagement, or the subscales. The total score of the Religiosity subscales significantly predicted total levels of Altruism and Moral Disengagement, concluding that it is not the specific religion that predicts these behaviours but higher levels of self reported religiousness.

## ***Introduction***

*“All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”*

– U.N – Universal Declaration on Human Rights – Article 1.

## *The Origin of Moral Sense*

Darwin (1871) wrote of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important. To take pleasure in others, to feel sympathy for, perform service for and even to risk life for our fellow man is an innate behaviour which was developed by our ancestors from social instincts. He postulates that any animal endowed with these social instincts would inevitably acquire this moral sense as soon as its intellectual abilities were well enough developed. This same social instinct also played a role in the development of altruistic tendencies. Darwin considered the moral sense of humans as an asset to any community and as a factor in natural selection as they would be victorious over other communities, thus becoming characteristic of those that evolve. While Rutherford (2007) claims that morality is a product of sophisticated human culture not something that has been hard-wired into our minds by an evolutionary process, Darwin (1871) thought it indisputable that as the social feelings that cause moral thinking are instinctive or innate in the lower animals that therefore there should be no question that it should be the same way in man.

Mill (1863) from his own work on Utilitarianism rebuffs Darwin's theories and instead puts forward the concept that moral feelings are in fact not innate but acquired, though naturally. He references the golden rule as being the essence of utility; “To do as one would be done by,

and to love one's neighbour as oneself, constitutes the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality." (Mill, 1863, pg. 24) So although he dismisses the idea of inborn morals Mill argues that the higher, intellectual and moral pleasures are superior to the lower, more physical forms of pleasure, making moral behaviour an asset to the benefactor.

Mill was not alone in the idea of acquisition of a moral sense as later it was elaborated on by Freud (1925) in the psychoanalytic theory of the superego. This aspect of the psychic apparatus is formed during the dissolution of the Oedipus complex by a child's successful identification with the parental agency and society, resulting in the ego ideal and conscience; a sense of what is right and wrong. Engaging in acts that the conscience considers wrong or socially unacceptable gives way to feelings of guilt and an attempt to make the ego act in a more moral way. While the Oedipal phase is the stage at which morality and social sense are formed, according to Freud (1925) there is a third spawn which then completes the chief elements in the higher side of man, that being religion and all three are acquired phylogenetically out of the father complex.

Erikson's 'Industry vs. Inferiority' stage of psychosocial development added to Freud's one stop moral stage theory by putting forward the idea that children at this age are working hard to be responsible, at being good and right, reasonable and cooperative (Allen & Marotz, 2003). While the super ego shaped conscience of childhood cannot be fully replaced as one develops, instead elements of morality are taken in by the ideology of adolescence and then ethical adulthood follows (Hoare, 2005).

Kohlberg's (1971, 1977) theory of the development of the moral sense also takes shape over the life span. It is moulded over three stages beginning in childhood when morality is self focused and defined by rules set by the parents but also satisfies the child's needs. During adolescence the child has developed and understands these rules set out for them and will aim to achieve expectations set out for them. In the final stage as adults, the variation of morals from person to person and culture to culture is understood and morality is seen as upholding your own values and a decision on right and wrong can be circumstantial.

Modern theorists seek to explain conscience or moral sense as a function of the brain that has evolved to assist altruism in society. Lewis, Kanai, Bates & Rees (2012) using (Haidt & Graham, 2008) the five core foundations of moral behaviour (minimising harm to others, fairness, in group loyalty, respect for authority and purity) examined whether individual differences in regional brain volume were predictive of variation in moral value and found that several brain regions were significantly associated with moral values. The findings show that moral sentiment variation corresponds to individual differences in brain structure and suggest that moral values possess deep-rooted biological bases distributed across distinct brain regions.

Two further studies (Moll et al., 2006, Tankersley, Stowe & Huettel, 2007) then made an attempt to show the location of where altruism originates in the brain using functional magnetic resonance imaging to show the brain's activity in people playing computer games where they could earn money for real-life charities. The research also connected this to the participant's everyday behaviours including charitable work and their general capacity for altruism. Both studies conclude that areas of the cerebral cortex – the outer layer of the brain that serves highly

evolved cognitive functions, such as abstract thought and self-awareness – are key mediators of altruistic behaviour. Mendez (2009) more specifically found that the main neuromoral areas are the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and adjacent orbitofrontal, plus ventrolateral cortex, amygdalae, and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. Despite showing that acting altruistically is a common human feature there are multiple individual mechanisms that also contribute. Eslinger (Pacchioli, 2006) explains that the functions that these areas produce exist in a variety of species including non-human primates but in humans these drives have undergone an expansion to encompass complex social contexts. It is the front part of the brain where they are located that in comparison to others is vastly enlarged providing the basis for all of our interpersonal abilities, including altruism; assisting the argument that there is a biological basis to morality.

### *Religious Influence*

Moral conduct and altruistic acts are central to the well-being of people and the unity of societies, therefore understanding their origins and influences is an important social goal. While research gives us both various theories and scientific evidence of how these aspects of the human condition have come about it is vital that we also acknowledge the different parts of life that can influence moral and altruistic behaviour. Worldwide, more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group. A comprehensive demographic study based on analysis of more than 2,500 censuses, surveys and population registers of more than 230 countries and territories estimates that there are 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children around the globe, representing 84% of the 2010 world population of 6.9 billion. (The Global Religious Landscape, 2012) In Ireland as of the 2011 census this number increases further with 94% of the population listing themselves under a religious organisation, 90.47% of which are Christian, the most

prominent group within which is the Roman Catholics making up 84.16% of the entire population. Despite the Irish population increasing by 29.9%, this percentage of Catholics in Ireland is in fact it's lowest ever recorded level falling from 94.9% at its peak in 1961. It is also noteworthy that the secular population multiplied to three times its original number. With the percentage of Catholics slowly falling in the sixties and seventies and steadily accelerating from the eighties, and also the sum total of those with no religion, atheists and agnostics increasing more than fourfold between 1991 and 2011, it must be queried what these changes have in store for the future of our country (Central Statistics Office, 2012).

Religion may be on the decrease in Ireland but religious extremism is on the increase elsewhere as seen in the war and violence in countries such as Syria, Libya, Iraq and Lebanon, as well as Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Pakistan, Nigeria, and in many parts of central Africa and across central Asia where acts of terrorism are perpetrated by people motivated by an abuse of religion. Tony Blair, ex British prime minister, decreed that "It is a perversion of faith. But there is no doubt that those who commit the violence often do so by reference to their faith and the sectarian nature of the conflict is a sectarianism based on religion. There is no doubt either that this phenomenon is growing, not abating." (Blair, 2014)

The 'Golden Rule' or ethic of reciprocity, that which Mill declares the basis of Utilitarianism, is an ethical code or moral that essentially says that one should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself and one should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated. Long before Islam and Christianity Confucius has his own version 'Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself'. In their most simple forms, this is altruism

and moral disengagement. Alone the Golden rule would simply be a motivation against doing wrong but it should actually serve as an incentive towards proactive action. The rule can be found in some form in almost every ethical tradition. Taking examples from the list above we can see (The Global Religious Landscape, 2012) that Syria with a population of 22 million of which almost 19 million are Muslim, Iraq's population is about 32.5 million with over 31 million Muslims, and Pakistan has over 179 million people and 167 million Muslims. The Sahih Muslim (The Book on Government) declares 'Whoever wishes to be delivered from the fire and to enter paradise should treat other people as they wish to be treated themselves' and 'The most righteous person is the one who consents for other people what he consents for himself, and who dislikes for them what he dislikes for himself'. Nigeria has a population of 168 million consisting of 77 million Muslims and 78 million Christians. In various parts of the bible it declares 'Do to others what you want them to do to you, this is the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets' (Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31). This moral guide is reiterated again in Leviticus 19:18 'Forget about the wrong things people do to you, and do not try to get even. Love your neighbour as you love yourself' and Leviticus 19:34 'But treat them just as you treat your own citizens. Love foreigners as you love yourselves, because you were foreigners one time in Egypt. I am the Lord your God'. If people are truly influenced by religion and by their god or gods, why is there no sign of this most basic guide in wars and conflicts?

Antonenko-Young, Willer & Keltner (2013) found that religious fundamentalism and its association with lower integrative complexity and submission is connected with a tendency towards rule-based moral processing. It would also hold an aversion to using multiple

perspectives and a propensity to submit to religious authority leading fundamentalists not to consider the particular details of each situation, instead applying previously established and Biblically condoned moral codes. In another study, (Bushman, Ridge, Das, Key & Busath, 2007) individuals who were led to believe that killing is condoned by the Bible were more likely to comply with a suggestion to administer painful punishment than those who were led to believe the same actions are condoned by a secular source. They found that exposure to a scriptural depiction of violence or to violence authorised by a deity can cause readers to behave more aggressively, with the level of violence greater when it was said to be sanctioned by god than when god was not mentioned. The study shows that there is a justification of violence when the aggressive behaviour can be attributed to a scriptural source and evidence that even among participants who were not religiously devout, exposure to god-sanctioned violence increased subsequent aggression. There is also evidence (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007, Rossano, 2007) that religious morality instead facilitates the development of cooperative societies and that it has expanded the social scrutiny of individual behaviour to include supernatural agents. The studies found that including ever watchful ancestors, spirits and gods in the social realm, humans discovered an effective strategy for restraining selfishness and building more cooperative groups. This would tie in with Darwin's (1871) idea that the adaptive value of religion would enhance group survival.

### *Moral Disengagement*

Moral Justification is just one of mechanisms of Moral Disengagement (Bandura, 2002) which also encompasses sanitising language and exonerative social comparison; disavowal of personal agency in the harm one causes by diffusion or displacement of responsibility;

disregarding or minimising the injurious effects of one's actions; and attribution of blame to, and dehumanisation of, those who are victimised. Justification is an aspect present in various religions; in Christianity god removes both guilt and the penalty of sin and also then declares the sinner righteous; "but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:24-25). Justification is granted to all who exercise faith according to Lutherans and Calvinists; "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Bandura acknowledges that although there are many influences, both personally and socially, that could cause a disengagement of morals, civilised life requires safeguards that are ingrained in the social structure that uphold compassionate behaviour and renounce cruelty. It has been found (Zuckerman, 2009) that atheists and non-believers are markedly less supportive of the death penalty than their religious peers, and far more accepting and supportive of homosexuality and women's rights. The golden rule that is advertised in various ways by so many religions, especially the biggest and most powerful ones, should therefore be a moral guide and not means to disengage ones morals. Bandura's (1996) concept revolves around the idea that most people find shame and guilt are uncomfortable to deal with and while some will use the negativity to develop positive character traits and integrity, others will attempt different methods to lessen or dispel them; the strategies of moral disengagement. According to Bandura using these mechanisms can satisfy someone's need to look or feel like they behaving morally because they are conforming to the values of their role models, spiritual guides, or political leaders. He (1996) goes on to explain that although various mechanisms of moral disengagement work in concert, the ones that contribute most heavily to involvement in detrimental activities are the vilification

of victims and linkage of harmful conduct to worthy causes. It is questionable as to whether these worthy causes and the onus of responsibility and justification can be related back to religion. There can be an element of promotion of vilification of others when it comes to religion, perhaps to aid compliance it is worth insisting others can be evil, inferior, and deserving punishment or even elimination; “O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, - an evil refuge indeed.” (Sura 9:73-74) “For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, as it is written there is none righteous, there is none that doeth good, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps under their lips, mouths full of cursing and bitterness” (Romans 3:9-14)

#### *Altruism and Prosocial Behaviour*

However, according to Campbell (1975) our biological heritage predisposes us to selfishness and what is needed to counteract this and to encourage prosocial behaviour is religion. The Islamic concept of Taqwa is closely related to conscience. In the Qur’an verses 2:197 and 22:37 there are references to right conduct and guarding against evil, and how these are not just a product of the individual but also require inspiration from god. Verses 91:7–8 include god the almighty talking about how he has perfected the soul, the conscience and has taught it the wrong and right. It has also been found (Johnson, Li, Cohen & Okun, 2013) that the type of god, whether authoritarian or benevolent will have an influence on behaviour. The study showed that those with an angry, punishing and vengeful god will act aggressively when offended or threatened and those with a kind and loving god are less likely to act aggressively in those circumstances. However the same belief in the punishing supernatural agent also predicts more honest behaviour in anonymous situations (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011). The

Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis (Johnson & Kruger, 2004) proposes that throughout the development of humanity it is the fear of supernatural punishment that has deterred people from not only doing bad things but to go on and do good. It goes on to suggest that as supernatural beliefs are universal and seem to serve an important function in promoting cooperation that they therefore represent an adaptive trait of natural selection. Johnson (2005) tested the hypothesis using data from 186 societies around the world and found some support for the notion that supernatural punishment may be associated with cooperation among human societies. Rossano (2007) also postulates that the idea of vigilant spiritual monitors, that the belief in spirits and supernatural forces has helped reduce the number of non-co-operators within a group while reinforcing group behavioural norms, thus allowing human-like levels of cooperation to emerge. A poll conducted in the UK (Survey: UK Muslims give more to charity than Jews, Christians) on behalf of [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com), a platform for charity giving, found that Muslims report giving more money annually to charity than Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Jews. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam, and is expected to be paid by all practicing Muslims who have the financial means and it can range from 2.5% of capital assets to 20% of agricultural goods and livestock. Zakat (Heck, 2006) must be given for the sake of salvation. Giving Zakat is a means of purifying the soul and those that do give can expect reward from God in the afterlife while those who don't are deemed hypocrites and are damned by god who will refuse to accept their prayers. On the Day of Judgment, those who didn't give the zakat will be held accountable and punished. If other religions had a similar manifesto would their donations rise?

Contrary to Campbell's idea of innate selfishness Batson (1987) suggests, that an empathically mediated kin-specific altruistic impulse may be part of our genetic heritage. It is

also suggested that one function of religion may be to extend the range of this limited, kin-specific altruistic impulse through the use of kinship language and imagery. Religions can often be seen as playing a role in shaping behaviour and proving to be beneficial to society as those who play by the rules receive the ultimate gift – a place in heaven. If selfishness is innate and we need god to guide us morally, what then is to become of the secular?

Studies (Sharriff & Norenzayan, 2007, Pichon, Boccato & Soraglon, 2007) showed that those with religious tendencies will be more prosocial. However in both studies the participants were primed with religious concepts. Another priming study using highly devout students preparing to enter the clergy showed that compared to other students in a public goods game and a dictator game, the former were significantly more cooperative and significantly more generous. These studies don't give us an idea of how a theist or secular person would rate on their pro social tendencies in everyday life. One study (Grossman & Parrett, 2011) where no priming was involved revealed no evidence of religious prosociality and another found (Saslow et al, 2013) that spirituality, above and beyond religiosity, is uniquely associated with enhanced altruism. The majority of research seems to focus on the influence religion has on prosocial behaviour rather than from the altruistic side. The subtle difference being that the motivation behind altruism is other orientated rather than self-orientated; voluntarily helping others with no purpose or prospect of compensation or reward for oneself.

### *Present Study*

Therefore the purpose of this investigation is to examine the influence of religion on the population in terms of effects of both their altruistic acts and tendency to morally disengage.

Previous research has focused on religions link with pro social behaviour and there is little done on its connection with disengaging morals. With secularity on the rise are we on the path to becoming ‘filthy, corrupt people who do abominable works and do no good’ (Psalm 14:1-3) or a society with a higher rate of selfless concern and ethical, moral treatment of others (‘Show me you faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do’ (James2:15-18) ‘You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone’ (James 2:24))? Freud (1961) previously posited along similar lines whether those without religion in their lives will feel like they have no obligation to follow society’s moral codes. He notes that for some, secular motives for morality replace religious ones; but he acknowledges, albeit dramatically, that others do exist who may commit murder if not told that God forbids it.

The aim of this study is to explore the influence of religion on altruistic acts and moral disengagement, in the hope of finding a correlation between levels of religiousness and overall Altruism and the eight mechanisms of Moral Disengagement: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility, Distortion of Consequences, Attribution of Blame, and Dehumanisation. Does religion make people more concerned with the welfare of others, more sacrificing, selfless and giving for the good of others? Does religion have an effect on one’s tendency to morally disengage? Without god or religion as a way to displace or diffuse responsibility or as a way to disregard or misrepresent the consequences of their actions, will there be less harm done to others? If there is a positive correlation between religion and either variable, will the extent of one’s religiosity play a role?

It is hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship Religion and overall Altruism. It is also hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship between Religion and levels of total Moral Disengagement and its eight subscales. More specifically it is hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship between Religiousness and its five subscales: Intellect, Ideology, Public Practice, Private Practice, and Experience, and Altruism, and Religiousness and its subscales and Moral Disengagement and its subscales.

## *Methodology*

### *Participants*

Convenience and random sampling methods were employed to gather surveys from a total of 199 participants. Convenience sampling was achieved by sending the online survey link to friends, family, work colleagues and associates. Random sampling was achieved through a post on a webpage dedicated to surveys (<http://www.reddit.com/r/SampleSize/>). The aim was to create as diverse a population as possible. Two participants were excluded because they had listed themselves as 17, and the required age for acceptance was 18. The final sample was made up of 103 males and 94 females aged from 18 to 66 ( $M = 29$ ,  $SD = 9.5$ ). The participants identified their religious orientation from a list (Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Apostolic/Pentecostal, Methodist, Jehovah's Witness, Lutheran, Protestant, Evangelical, Baptist, Latter Day Saints (Mormon), Quaker (Society of Friends), Plymouth Brethren, Islam, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Atheist, Agnostic, or an Other box where any other option could be entered) on the survey and from this they were condensed into 5 subgroups comprised of 60 Christian, 82 Atheist, 27 Agnostic, 10 Other, 18 Lapsed. The 'Other' category was comprised of any faith where there was too few in the sample to be considered representative.

In order for each sample to be used the participant had to be over the age of 18 and have given their consent on the survey to participate. There was no reward or incentive given for participating. The study was given approval by the Dublin Business School Psychology Research Ethics Committee and all ethical principles in the Code of Professional Ethics were adhered to.

### *Design*

The design was a quantitative, between groups, design which investigated the relationships between the predictor variables: Religion and Religiosity, and the criterion variables: Altruism and Moral Disengagement. Religiosity was divided into five subgroups: Intellect, Ideology, Public Practice, Private Practice, and Experience. Moral Disengagement was divided into eight subgroups: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility, Distortion of Consequences, Attribution of Blame, and Dehumanisation.

### *Materials*

The survey given to participants was comprised of a small demographics section and three surveys.

#### *Demographics*

The demographics asked were: Age, Gender, and Religion. The list of Religions contained 21 options including an 'other' box to insert one that was not listed. The list was retrieved from the Irish Census (Central Statistics Office, 2012).

#### *Moral Disengagement*

A Moral Disengagement scale was used (Detert, Sweitzer & Trevino, 2008) to examine the eight previously listed mechanisms of moral disengagement. The scale is a 32-item version of the Bandura et al (1996) original Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement which was modified from a child version to a young adult version. As the Detert et al scale was adapted to fit a

student population, in the current survey certain statements were modified to make them more universal; “A student who only suggests breaking the rules should not be blamed if other students go ahead and do it” was changed to “Someone who suggests breaking the rules should not be blamed if others go ahead and do it”, in the statement “It is okay to treat someone badly if they have behaved like a 'worm'”, the word ‘worm’ was changed to ‘creep’, in the statement “Not working very hard in school is really no big deal when you consider that other people are probably cheating”, the reference to school was removed and the statement “If students misbehave in class, it’s their teachers fault” was changed to “If people break the law then the police are at fault”. The items are designed to tap the eight subcomponents of the overarching moral disengagement construct. The scale was found to have high reliability ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### *Altruism*

The Altruistic Personality Scale was used (Rushton, Chrisjohn & Fekken, 1981) to measure altruistic tendency by gauging the frequency with which one engages in altruistic acts primarily towards strangers. Of the original 20 items, 15 were used. The 5 items were removed as they were deemed unlikely to occur and therefore unnecessary to include (I have given a stranger a lift in my car, I have let a neighbour whom I didn’t know too well borrow an item of some value to me, I have before being asked voluntarily looked after a neighbour’s pets or children without being paid for it, I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street, I have helped an acquaintance to move households). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Very Often*). The scale was found to have high reliability ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

### *Religiosity*

The Central Religiosity Scale (CRS) (Huber & Huber, 2012) is a measure of the centrality, importance or salience of religious meanings in personality. It measures the general intensities of the five previously listed theoretically defined core dimensions of religiosity which can be seen as channels or modes in which personal religious constructs are shaped and activated. The validity of this measurement strategy was confirmed empirically. There are very high correlations between the CRS and self reports of the salience of the religious identity. The CRS was found to have high reliability ( $\alpha = .93$ ) (Huber & Huber, 2012). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Very much so*).

### *Procedure*

The survey was sent out via email and also posted on [www.Reddit.com/r/Samplesize](http://www.Reddit.com/r/Samplesize). A cover sheet was included detailing that participants must be over 18, that completion was entirely anonymous and withdrawal was possible at any time before clicking submit.

## ***Results***

### *Data Analysis*

The data was tested to determine whether it was normally distributed and a Shapiro Wilks test indicated that some of it was not normally distributed. As it has been recognized that small sample sizes are more often not normally distributed, the decision was made to run the normal parametric tests. Descriptive statistics (median, mean, standard deviation) and some frequency statistics were used. A probability level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

The data was analysed using a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to investigate the differences between the religious groupings and their levels of Altruism, and Moral Disengagement and its subscales. The significant predictors were entered into a Bonferroni multiple comparisons test to show where any significant differences occurred. Multiple Regression was then used to examine the relationship between Religiosity and Altruism, and Religiosity and Moral Disengagement and its subscales. The next analysis involved examining a possible correlation between the dimensions of Religiosity and Altruism and Moral Disengagement. In order to do this, a Pearson's correlation was used to flag any possible significant correlations. Further analyses were done using a Pearson's correlation to examine a possible correlation between Altruism, Moral Disengagement and its subscales and the Demographics Age and Gender.

### *Results*

The first and second hypotheses were tested using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) which showed that between the five Religious groups that there was no significant difference with levels of Altruism, Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Diffusion of

Responsibility, Distortion of Consequences, Attribution of Blame, and Dehumanisation.

However, levels of Displacement of Responsibility differed significantly ( $F(4, 192) = 2.49, p = .044$ ). Post hoc analysis showed the differences were in fact not significant in nature. Levels of Advantageous Comparison showed a significant trend ( $F(4, 192) = 2.3, p = .06$ ). Post hoc Bonferroni analysis showed that the differences were significant in nature between the Christian group ( $M = 6.33, SD = 2.31$ ) and the higher scoring Atheist group ( $M = 7.7, SD = 2.81$ ), (Mean difference = 1.362,  $p = .039, CI(95\%) .04 - 2.68$ )

For the third and fourth hypotheses Multiple regression found that of the religiousness subscales that with 7.2% variance ( $R^2 = .072, F(5, 191) = 4.05, p = .002$ ) Intellect ( $\beta = .26, p = .036, 95\% CI = .016 - .458$ ) and Ideology ( $\beta = .41, p < .04, 95\% CI = .013 - .584$ ) significantly predicted the Euphemistic Labelling aspect of Moral Disengagement. Multiple regression found that two predictors explained the 10% variance ( $R^2 = .105, F(5, 191) = 4.5, p = .001$ ). Intellect significantly predicted Distortion of Consequences ( $\beta = .339, p = .006, 95\% CI = .073 - .432$ ) and Ideology showed a trend ( $\beta = .377, p = .06, 95\% CI = -.009 - .454$ ). It also found that the total Religiousness significantly predicted Altruism ( $R^2 = .064, F(5, 191) = 2.63, p = .025$ ) ( $\beta = .794, p = .059, 95\% CI = -.021 - 1.09$ ) and total Moral Disengagement ( $R^2 = .075, F(5, 191) = 3.11, p = .01$ ) ( $\beta = .854, p = .042, 95\% CI = -1.58 - -.031$ )

Pearson's correlation coefficient also found also positive relationships between Altruism and all five Religiousness subscales: Intellect ( $M = 7.66, SD = 2.97$ ), ( $r(195) = 0.153, p = .032$ ), Public Practice ( $M = 4.6, SD = 2.3$ ), ( $r(195) = 0.17, p = .017$ ), Private Practice ( $M = 9.89, SD =$

24.51), ( $r(195) = 0.22, p = .002$ ), Experience ( $M = 7.8, SD = 3.46$ ), ( $r(195) = 0.17, p = .019$ ), Ideology ( $M = 6.43, SD = 3.7$ ), ( $r(195) = 0.14, p = .047$ ).

The mean scores for Altruism was 47.31 ( $SD = 9.2$ ) and for Age was 29.03 ( $SD = 9.56$ ). A Pearson correlation coefficient found that there was a positive significant relationship between Altruism and Age ( $r(195) = 0.27, p < .01$ ). This relationship can account for 7.29% of variation of scores. Using a Pearson's correlation coefficient it was found that there was no relationship between the total Moral Disengagement score and Age or the Religiousness subscale Intellect. There were significant negative relationships between Moral Disengagement ( $M = 66.63, SD = 12.8$ ) and the remaining 4 religiousness subscales: Public Practice  $r(195) = -0.22, p = .002$ , Private Practice  $r(195) = -0.26, p < .01$ , Experience  $r(195) = -0.2, p = .004$ , Ideology  $r(195) = -0.21, p = .003$ ).

Males ( $M = 8.28, SD = 8.96$ ) were found to have higher levels Religious Intellect than females ( $M = 6.98, SD = 2.67$ ) ( $t(195) = 3.164, p = .057$ ). The 95% confidence limits show that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between .491 and 2.11.

Table 1: *An Independent Samples T-test table displaying the significant differences between Males and Females and three Moral Disengagement subscales.*

	Groups	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Euphemistic Labelling	Males	10.30	3	1.166	195	.004
	Females	9.85	2.33	1.179	190.18	
Advantageous Comparison	Males	7.57	3	2.193	195	.004
	Females	6.71	2.37	2.217	190.41	
Distortion of Consequences	Males	8.7	2.39	3.425	195	.044
	Females	7.65	1.842	3.465	189.63	

Table 1 shows that Males had higher mean scores than Females for the Moral Disengagement subscales Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison and Distortion of Consequences.

## ***Discussion***

### *Review*

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships and differences between different religious groups (Christian, Atheist, Agnostic, Lapsed and Other) and levels of Religiosity and whether they have an effect on levels of Altruism, and Moral Disengagement and its eight subscales: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility, Distortion of Consequences, Attribution of Blame, and Dehumanisation. It had been hypothesised that there would be a significant difference between the Religious groups and overall Altruism. It was also hypothesised that there would be a significant difference between the religious groups and levels of total Moral Disengagement and its eight subscales. More specifically it was hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between overall Religiousness, its five subscales: Intellect, Ideology, Public Practice, Private Practice and Experience, and Altruism, Moral Disengagement and its subscales. Analysis of the data did not support the first and second hypotheses as it showed that there was no significant differences between the religious groupings when it came to levels of Altruism and Moral Disengagement, or the subscales. The last two more specific hypotheses were supported as the total score of the Religiosity subscales significantly predicted total levels of Altruism and Moral Disengagement, with significant relationships between all Religiosity subscales and Altruism and significant a negative relationship between Moral Disengagement and four of the five Religiosity subscales, concluding that it is not the specific religion that predicts these behaviours but higher levels of self-reported religiousness. It was also found that although Males scored significantly higher on Religious Intellect they were more likely than Females to utilise the Moral Disengagement

mechanisms of Euphemistic Labelling, Advantageous Comparison and Distortion of Consequences. Lastly, it was found and that as age increases so does Altruistic behaviour.

### *Literature Review*

While analyses on the first and second hypotheses gave no significant result it may be due to the groupings that were made from the data gathered. A more diverse span of Religions may have produced more a significant result as the majority of participants in this research were divided between Christians and Atheist/Agnostic. The 'Other' category consisted of merely 10 participants, of which the dominant religion was Jewish with three participants. This group in comparison to 82 Atheist and 60 Christian does not seem like a fair analysis.

The more specific third and forth hypotheses were supported showing that the Religiosity total and its subscales significantly predicted total levels of Moral Disengagement and its subscales and Altruism. These findings support some of the previous research done (Sharriff & Norenzayan, 2007, Pichon et al, 2007) which showed that those with religious tendencies will be more prosocial. It would also tie in with evidence (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007, Rossano, 2007) that religious morality facilitates the development of cooperative societies; that including watchful ancestors, spirits and gods in the social realm is an effective strategy for restraining selfishness and building more cooperative groups. It would also somewhat support Saslow et al. (2013) findings that spirituality, above and beyond religiosity, is uniquely associated with enhanced altruism. It would be an interesting path of further study to explore the type of god of each religion and its effect on altruistic behaviour. Johnson (2005) has done something similar but like most research used prosocial behaviour as opposed to altruism. His extensive data found

some support for the notion that supernatural punishment may be associated with cooperation among human societies. Rossano (2007) also postulates that the idea that vigilant spirits and supernatural forces has helped reduce the number of non-co-operators within a group and therefore allowed human-like levels of cooperation to emerge.

Some research would conflict with these findings as it has been shown that (Bushman et al, 2007) individuals were more likely to administer a painful punishment and to behave more aggressively when it was thought that killing is condoned by the Bible and sanctioned by god than when god was not mentioned. Also (Young, Willer & Keltner, 2013) it was found that religious fundamentalists hold an aversion to seeing things from others perspectives or consider the details of an individual situation, that they instead have a tendency to submit to religious authority applying previously established and Biblically condoned moral codes. This would seem contradictory of the current papers research as it would go against many of the mechanisms of Moral Disengagement including Moral Justification, Displacement of Responsibility, Diffusion of Responsibility and Attribution of Blame.

Modern theorists seek to explain conscience or moral sense as functions of the brain that have evolved to assist altruism in society. Pacchioli (2006) explains that these areas are present in a variety of species but in humans this area is vastly enlarged providing the basis for all of our interpersonal abilities, including altruism. While this assists the argument that there is a biological basis to morality (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007, Rossano, 2007) research then showed that with religious morality humans discovered an effective strategy for restraining selfishness and building more cooperative groups, which would tie in with Darwin's (1971) idea that the

adaptive value of religion would enhance group survival. As world-wide more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group and in Ireland 94% of the population listing themselves under a religious organisation, it would be an interesting area of research to see what effect religion therefore had on levels of selfishness and cooperation within groups.

Another avenue of study would be to attempt analyses of the countries that are overwrought with war and violence like Syria, Iraq and Nigeria which also have populations that are dominated by religion. This link is one of the great challenges of modern society. The endorsement of violence by religious communities is often combined with new forms of religious fundamentalism, which poses a challenge for inter-religious dialogue and sets a central task in defending the rule of law. Many people reference to their faith as the basis for violence and this practice is growing, not abating and leading to the misuse of institutional justificatory power for exploitive and destructive purposes (Blair, 2014). It is the job of not just religious leaders but members of each faith to acknowledge the responsibility that they have to educate others and to be living embodiments of the Golden Rule. It is an emphasis on this widespread moral stand point as a basic ethical consensus that would help each religion ensure the respect of the others; promoting the well-being of others and proscribing any ill-doing.

### *Methodology Review*

The Altruistic Personality scale was scored on a five point Likert scale consisting of 1 (*Never*), 2 (*Once*), 3 (*More than Once*), 4 (*Often*) and 5 (*Very Often*), however it seems there could be some confusion for participants as would constitute *More than Once* rather than *Often*. The former could in reality be twice for one person and be considered *Often* for another.

Some of the questions on the scale were removed due to the lack of likelihood that they would actually occur and in review there are others that perhaps should have been reconsidered. For example the statements '*I have helped a stranger whose car had broken down or was out of fuel*' and '*I have pointed out a clerks error*' may have been low scoring as some participants may never have come across these situations and is then rated as less Altruistic because of it. The statement '*I have donated blood*' should have been omitted as there are various reasons including sexual orientation, tattoos and low haemoglobin levels that mean people are unable to donate.

The issue with the Moral Disengagement scale used is that it was adapted from the original children's version (Bandura, 2002) to fit a student population of teen to young adults (Detert et al, 2008) and then again for this research to attempt to make it more universal. For future research it may be worthwhile reassessing the statements in the scale to ensure that they are not just the best adaptation but also the best fit.

For future research it might be worth formulating a new scale that incorporates religious aspects in to both the scales for Altruism and Moral Disengagement to see if the religious influence would have more of an impact on results. As in previous research it has been shown that religious priming has had an effect (Sharriff & Norenzayan, 2007, Pichon, et al, 2007) on prosocial behaviour, (Bushman et al, 2007) that individuals who were led to believe that killing is condoned by the Bible were more likely to comply with a suggestion to administer painful punishment than those who were led to believe the same actions are condoned by a secular source and that Muslims (Survey: UK Muslims give more to charity than Jews, Christians) give

more to charity because Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. It seems integral to any further study that religion is combined with the two scales and compared to a similar secular version.

It is also noteworthy that when the participants were broken down into the five religious groupings that the majority of them were in the Christian, Atheist and Agnostic groups. For future research it would be worthwhile to obtain a broader sample of Religions so as to make the research less biased and more interesting to explore due to different teachings. There is also an issue with the survey being a self report tool as participants may acknowledge the basis of the study and alter their responses so as their religious grouping comes across better than others.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, the present study raises some interesting questions about the link between Religion and Altruistic behaviour and Moral Disengagement. While there was no significant difference in the Religious groups when it came to the criterion variables, there was however a significant difference when it came to those who reported themselves as more religious. While previous research has had a tendency to focus on prosocial behaviour this study still somewhat supports it. There is very little research done on the connection that Religion and religiousness has on Moral Disengagement as the present study hasn't scratched the surface. It would make interesting further research to focus on this relationship, especially due to the current issues of war and violence in so many religiously dominated countries. Osama Bin Laden speaking about global terrorism declared "We will continue this course because it is part of our religion and because Allah, praise and glory be to him, ordered us to carry out jihad so that the word of Allah

may remain exalted to the heights”. (Bin Laden, as cited in Bandura, 2002) Perhaps this is another facet of evolution as Rossano (2007) concludes that it is the adaptive value of religion that enhances group survival.

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## *Appendices*

# **The Influence of Religion on Altruistic Acts and Moral Disengagement**

My name is Catherine Nolan and I am conducting psychological research that explores the influence religion has on altruistic acts and moral disengagement. (Altruistic acts would be things you do selflessly to aid others. Moral disengagement would be when you convince yourself that your normal morals don't apply in a particular context.)

You are invited to take part in this study. Participation involves completing the following questionnaire which takes about 15 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary, confidential and completely anonymous thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after it has been submitted, but you can withdraw at any time before you have clicked 'submit'. It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study. Also keep in mind that as the questionnaire is completely anonymous you can answer as honestly as possible.

The data from the questionnaires will be kept securely in electronic format on a password protected computer.

If you feel that some of these questions elicit any unwanted or uncomfortable feelings please contact the Samaritans at <http://www.samaritans.org/> or AWARE at <http://www.aware.ie/>.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact me on

or

My supervisor for this research is Chris Gibbons who can be contacted at

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

\* Required

I am over the age of 18 and understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that I am consenting to participate in the study. \*

(If your answer is no, please close out of the questionnaire)

Mark only one oval.

- Yes

Gender \*

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female

Age \*

What religion are you? \*

If you cannot find your religion on the list please add it in the 'other' box. If you were brought up as a member of a particular religion and still identify with that religion but no longer are a practising member of that faith please add "Lapsed" and your religion to the "Other" box.

Mark only one oval.

- Roman Catholic
- Church of Ireland
- Orthodox
- Presbyterian
- Apostolic/Pentecostal
- Methodist
- Jehovah's Witness
- Lutheran
- Protestant
- Evangelical
- Baptist
- Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
- Quaker (Society of Friends)
- Plymouth Brethren
- Islam
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Atheist
- Agnostic
- Other:

How often do you think about religious issues? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

Very Often

How often do you take part in religious services? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you pray? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that god or something divine intervenes in your life? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that god or something divine wants to communicate or reveal something to you? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that god or something divine is present? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Very Often

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

How often do you meditate? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

Very Often

How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that you are at one with all? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

Very Often

How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that you were touched by a divine power? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

Very Often

How often do you try to connect to the divine spontaneously when inspired by daily situations? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Never

Select a value from a range of 1, Never, to 5, Very Often,.

Very Often

I have helped a stranger whose car had broken down or was out of fuel. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have given directions to a stranger. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have made change for a stranger (eg giving coins for notes) \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once

- Often
- Very Often

I have given money to charity. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have given money to a stranger who needed it (or asked me for it) \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have donated goods or clothes to charity. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have done volunteer work for a charity. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have donated blood. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often

- Very Often

I have helped carry a stranger's belongings (books, parcels, etc) \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have delayed an elevator and held the door open for a stranger. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have allowed someone to go ahead of me in a queue (in the supermarket, at a copy machine, at a fast-food restaurant) \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have pointed out a clerks error (at the bank, the supermarket etc) in undercharging me. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have bought 'charity' holiday cards deliberately because I knew it was a good cause. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often

- Very Often

I have helped a classmate who I did not know that well with an assignment when my knowledge was greater than theirs. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

I have offered my seat on a bus or train to a stranger who was standing. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Once
- More than Once
- Often
- Very Often

It is alright to fight to protect your friends. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It's ok to steal to take care of your family's needs. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It's okay to attack someone who threatens your family's honor. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly Agree

Sharing test questions is just a way of helping your friends. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

You can't blame a person who plays only a small part in the harm caused by a group. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Talking about people behind their backs is just part of day to day life. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Looking at a friend's homework without permission is just "borrowing it". \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Damaging some property is no big deal when you consider that others are attacking people. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Stealing some money is not too serious compared to someone who stole alot. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Compared to other illegal things that people do, taking some things from a shop without paying for them isn't very serious. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Someone who is obnoxious does not deserve to be treated like a human being. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If people are living in poor conditions, they cannot be blamed if they behave aggressively. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If someone is pressured into doing something then they shouldn't be blamed for it. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

A member of a group or team shouldn't be blamed for the trouble the team caused. \*  
Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

People don't mind being teased because it shows some interest in them. \*  
Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If someone leaves something lying around, it's their own fault if it gets stolen. \*  
Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

People who are mistreated have usually done things to deserve it. \*  
Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

People are not at fault for misbehaving at work if their managers mistreat them. \*  
Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It is not bad to 'get high' once in a while. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Insults don't really hurt anyone. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Some people deserve to be treated like animals. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Someone who suggests breaking the rules should not be blamed if others go ahead and do it. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

People cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them to do it. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If a group does something harmful, it is unfair to blame any one member of the group for it. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It is okay to tell small lies because they don't really do any harm. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Teasing someone doesn't really hurt them. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It is okay to treat someone badly if they have behaved like a 'creep'. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Not working very hard is not a big deal when you consider that other people are probably cheating to get ahead. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If people break the law, then the police are at fault. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

To what extent do you believe that god exists? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all

Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,.

Very much so

How interested are you in learning more about religious topics? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all

Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,.

Very much so

To what extent do you believe in an afterlife? - eg immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation. \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all

Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,.

Very much so

How important is it to you to take part in religious services? \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all  
Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,. Very much so  
How important is personal prayer to you? \*  
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all  
Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,. Very much so  
In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists? \*  
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all  
Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,. Very much so  
How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community? \*  
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all  
Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,. Very much so  
How important is meditation to you? \*  
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all  
Select a value from a range of 1,Not at all, to 5,Very much so,. Very much so