

## Effects of Mysticism on Personality Development

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### **Abstract:**

"The current study focused on exploring the effects of mysticism on personality development between the followers and non-followers of the mysticism. The participants of the study were 100 (50 followers and 50 non follower) with equal distribution of male and female who were selected on the set criteria based on the five screening questions and Five factor inventory developed by the Paul, Costa, Robert & McCrae (1985).

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)."

### **Key Words:**

Mysticism, followers, personality, significant, correlation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The construction of the man is twofold, like (soma) body and soul. Soma is apparent while soul is hidden and intrinsic. Mysticism deals with 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 (Hajveri, 2000).

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).

The originality of mysticism is based on the word (Ehsan) the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) described the meaning of word (ehsan) to worship Allah as you see him if not then imagine Allah is seeing you. To keep your heart reserve only for Allah not for anyone else and the heart must be busy every time for the will of Allah 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).

Mysticism provides the perception of life and the life about hereafter. Mysticism leads the person how to connect with the Allah Almighty and how to reduce the level of tension and anxiety for the worldly objet and what is the reality of these worldly objects. When a person knows the reality of worldly things then ultimately level of stress, tension, conflicts and anxiety becomes down and a person feels peace of mind and satisfaction. A person who has less conflict, tension, anxiety, hopelessness and irrational

thoughts, then he achieves the development in his personality.

In this world there is no science or art trade or a business which man has acquired from the God Most high directly without the medium ship and intermediation of another unfortunate people which keep them back from treading the path of God and meeting a leader and guide. Satan did not prostrate before Adam out of envy and conceit and made Unitarianism an excuse for it and said I do not prostrate before anybody except God. Thus, though the accursed claimed and Unitarianism and disowned polytheism but on account of arrogance and egotism he was making man. It is the mere envy and arrogance of the sensual, blind, and dead-hearted, eternally himself a partner of God (Tabssum, 1994).

The preceptor is ever present in the assemblies of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and saints. At times the novice seeker can see this personality while at others he loses sight of it. If the seeker intends to commit some sin in the bright personality keeps him back and takes him to hard task rebuke him. If per chance he commits a sin, esoterically that personality brings him to such regret, sorrow and pain that the seeker burns the filth of that sin through repentance, lamination and crying. In the stage of teaching that bright personality appears in the form of the shaykh and in the place of seeking it appears in the form of the disciple but its real form is third one ( Muhammad ,2001).

In Pakistani society huge population follow the mysticism. 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 affair and hereafter (Jeelani, 2000). Cordial life cannot be attained through one's own efforts, mere recitations, and performance of duties and unguided seclusion. These bring about some temporary purity through mere purification of the self. (Wasif, 2000)

The western psychologist discussed about the biological and social behavioral problems but they did not discussed about the very important aspect of personality that is spirituality which is the hub of human personality. The mystics (sufis) did the treatment of these disorders to their disciples and nourished their mental abilities and gave them the sense of about the conscious of self and the gnosis of God Allah Almighty (Ajmal, 1998).

Mystics of Islam have presented the psychotherapy for the better mental health of the people. The most famous psychotherapy in Islamic mysticism is presented by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. This therapy is known as (Reading Therapy).

In Pakistani culture there is very less work about mysticism and its effects on the personality development, so this study will be a good contribution in this area of investigation. It is necessary to use the mystic knowledge in the therapy for the development of personality of the client as the literature review support this theory. This study primarily help the educationists, specifically teachers, psychologists and counselors to keep in view the role of mysticism in the personality and formation of the personality.

The present study was designed to find out the effects of mysticism on personality development, between the followers and non-followers of the mysticism. In our country huge population is the follower of the mysticism and in all of them there are so many those who are continuously under the training and supervision of their spiritual preceptor (Mystic) and on the other hand there are so many people in our country neither they have any spiritual preceptor (Mystic) nor they are under the training and guidance of any spiritual preceptor. The study was aimed to explore that followers of mysticism have the effects on their personality development in the specific aspects of personality such



as social, cognitive, psychological and moral development.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mysticism and personality development have been studied in various cultures and with the combinations of different other constructs of different population. In Pakistani cultures these constructs have insufficient research material. However available researches have a number of other constructs with combination of these constructs. The related literature review of the current study is as follows

1. Coe, George et, al (2012) narrated that mysticism is 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 make their developed personality.

Caird et, al (2011) One hundred and fifteen subjects 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.

Matthew, et al., (2011) At Jons Hopkins University, researcher conducted an experiment on that 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 conclude that mysticism has the great impact on the measurable change in personality trait rather than use of drug , and suggests more that mystical experience can be helpful against addiction and other life threatening diseases.

Matthew, (2011) 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 participant claims of hallucinogen-occasioned increases in aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and creativity, we found significant increases in Openness following a high-dose psilocybin session. In participants who had mystical experiences during their psilocybin session, Openness remained significantly higher than baseline more than 1 year after the session. The findings suggest a specific role for psilocybin and mystical-type experiences in adult personality change.

Deikman, (2010) described that the oral teaching recorded in the different mysticism of different religions and it has been observed that mystical teachers widely use the similar things for their followers. They are all concern with human sufferings, they described that human beings are ignorant of their nature that ignorance leads to lives of pain and mercy. The mystical tradition does not recommend therapy in the usual sense of that word but the aim of mystical tradition is to facilitate the human being and provide them a life without fear and anxiety. Mystics teach and guide their followers in every sense and every field of life, they fully try to make their balance and developed personality of their followers not in the sense of therapy but in the sense of teaching

and directions that directly effects on their self thoughts, purification of self, decision making, forgiveness and humble and polite attitude for others. Western culture often creates the distinction in religion and in mysticism especially in the psychological and psychiatric literature. This is therefore that mysticism deals with the self-development that is also done in psychotherapy. Mysticism deals with the every problem that modern psychotherapy has been unable to resolve this. So mysticism is dealing with the core problems of human beings, which they are facing in this new age. Human beings need meaning without this they remain depress, bore and in fatigue and psychotherapy deals with these problems by using scientific and clinical approaches to resolve these problems but they are unable to clear the questions that arises in the person that why I am here? What is the aim of life? Who I am? Why I am in this universe? Mysticism deals with that type of questions and satisfied the person and makes his link with the reality and the reality is (God) where every blessing comes form and every object will return from here to that world. It is hard in psychotherapy to deal with spiritual thinking of the client this task is done by the mystic with the help of his mystical knowledge.

Ghorbani & Watson (2009) reported mysticism with relevant topics of positive psychology. Iranian University students responded on the religious and personality factor on the mysticism scale. Research which was conducted to analyze the mystical experience with positive psychology, researcher concludes that psychology of religious experience is useful and clarifying the relation with positive psychology.

Marshal & Paul (2005) depicted that mysticism has the connection with the universe and with the human being, so mysticism directly effects on human life. The connection between

the universe and man brings nice changes on the thinking and other activities of the person that makes his life easy and peaceful.

Thanvi, (1999) depicted that a follower must have these characteristics for his/her spiritual leader, and the development of his soul and personality. Follower/ disciple must obey his spiritual leader and follower should not care about his wealth and life in the obedience of his spiritual life. Follower must have believed that only his spiritual leader can fulfill his desires and follower should not go any other spiritual leader. Followers mostly follow the preaching and sayings of his spiritual leader follower should not use the worldly things of his spiritual leader without the permission of spiritual leader. Follower should not objection on his spiritual preceptor. Follower should need to describe his problems, pains, dreams and other worldly and spiritual problems without any hesitation.

Chishti, (1999) described that the importance of mysticism can be judge in the intellectual and spiritual life of man that a famous philosopher (Russell) says that no one philosopher in this world has denied the importance of mysticism along with philosophy. In the world of thought we can achieve good position only with the collaboration of science and mysticism.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

The participants of the study were (N = 100) followers male (n=50) and the non-followers male (n=50). The minimum age of sample was 25 years and the minimum qualification was matriculation.

### **Sample inclusion criteria**

The entire male propels of division Faisalabad, follower and the non-followers of mysticism, with the minimum age of 25

years and with the minimum qualification of matriculation.

### Exclusion criteria

Those male who were less than 25 years of age and their qualification was less than metric and resident in any other division of Punjab rather than Faisal Abad. Those entire male in the population who were the follower of mysticism but they were not taking plight of fealty (Bai'at) of any mystic (Sufi) were not included in the study.

### Hypotheses

The main hypotheses of the study are as under.

- 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 a difference on openness to experience between the followers and non-followers.

### Research Instrument

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

A criteria was set for the saturation of followers and non-followers of mysticism on the basis of (5) screening questions. Every question in these criteria had (2) marks and the total score were (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) they were selected in the followers category. The answer of every question was in (Yes) and in (No) option.

NEO- Five factor Inventory (Neo-FFI):

McCrae R. R., Costa P. T., Martin T. A. (2005) 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.

Neo- FFI is a five point scale: 1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 =neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree and consists of 60 items. Divided in five domains according to five domains of personality.

## Procedure

In order to assess the effects of mysticism between the followers and non-followers of mysticism both were Muslim, a Set criteria based on the five screening questions 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 was 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. These domains related with the social, cognitive and moral development of the person and these are main elements, which are discussed in the theories of personality development. On the basis of these five domains, measured the effects of mysticism on personality development. Both of the instruments were in Urdu version. For the purpose of data collection different mosques, shrines, madrasas and Islamic centers of division Faisal Abad were visited. Sample was consisted of 100 male individuals, 50 followers and 50 non-followers with the minimum age 25 and minimum qualification of metric. According to the APA ethics, institutional approval considered first from the authorities of that institution, and then the subjects were approached and briefed

them about the purpose of the study after obtaining their consent about to participate in the study.

At the next step set criteria based on questionnaire was administered to sort out the followers and non-followers of the mysticism provided to the participants, participants were briefed about the study purpose and they were assured for confidentiality.

Then they are instructed orally how to respond on each question that they must choose one on yes or no choice and the total questions were five to sort out the followers and the non-followers of the mysticism. After that saturation of followers and the non-followers of mysticism on the basis of their response on that questionnaire then the next step was to administered on them (Neo FFI ) And they were instructed how to respond on each item and this inventory was on five scale rating having some questions their reverse scoring.

The participants completed the scale in a short time and some participants completed the scale in 25 to 30 minutes. The researcher has to face some problems such as resistance some people and some authorities of the religious institutions refused to cooperate but the researcher dealt with all the issues and collected that data from other institutions and people. After the process of data collection the researcher interpreted the data with the help of manual of the inventory.

## RESULT &| DISCUSSION

The instruments were used set criteria and FFI. To assess the hypotheses statistical tools of correlation and T test were used. Obtained results are given here.

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

### Table 1 Neuroticism t test

M	SD	M	SD	t	p	
23.220	4.999	35.560	8.246	-9.048	.000	df=98

It was observed that the difference between the followers and non-followers on T-test (Neuroticism) and the significance level ( $p < .05$ ), that indicates there was highly significant difference between the Neuroticism of the followers and the non-followers. It was also observed that the mean on Neuroticism of followers was (23.220) and the mean of the non-followers on the Neuroticism was (35.560). It was observed that the SD on Neuroticism of the followers was (4.999) and the SD of the non-followers was (8.246).

**Table 2 Extraversion T test**

M	SD	M	SD	t	p	
46.140	7.840	35.280	3.446	8.966	.000	df=98

It was observed that the difference between the followers and non-followers on T-test (Extraversion) and the significance level ( $p < .05$ ), that indicates there was highly significant difference between the Extraversion of the followers and the non-followers. It was also observed that the mean on Neuroticism of followers was (46.140) and the mean of the non-followers on the Neuroticism was (35.280). It was observed that the SD on Neuroticism of the followers was (7.840) and the SD of the non-followers was (3.446).

Hypothesis 3 There would be a difference on Openness between the followers and non-followers.

**Table 3 Openness T test**

M	SD	M	SD	t	p	
41.760	6.156	30.100	6.145	9.478	.000	df=98

It was observed that the difference between the followers and non-followers on T-test (Openness) and the significance level



( $p < .05$ ), that indicates there was highly significant difference between the openness of the followers and the non-followers. It was also observed that the mean on Neuroticism of followers was (41.760) and the mean of the non-followers on the Neuroticism was (30.100). It was observed that the SD on Neuroticism of the followers was (6.156) and the SD of the non-followers was (6.145).

There are so many people those who are associated with mysticism and they also follow the suggestions and directions of his mystic (Sufi) the study was made to explore the effect of mysticism on the followers and non-followers and both were Muslims. Mysticism deals with the intrinsic aspect of religion Islam it is the inner expression of the inner of any person. Like the apparent behavior of an personality is the inner expression of the feelings of the person that can be observed by the study of his behavior and in different domains of personality. In this study on the basis of FFI five domains of personality were used such as Neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

There are domains that are positive and indicate personality development but the domain Neuroticism negatively indicates the reverse personality development. If these domains of personality increase that indicates the personality development in the person, it shows that the high score on these four domains of personality indicates the personality development whereas the less score indicates the there is less development in the personality. But on the domain of Neuroticism if the score is high its indicates the negative aspect of the participants personality if a participants obtains a less score on it it means positive aspect of his personality. The score on set criteria based on screening questions if the participant obtains (6) or more that (6) score participant included

in the followers category if a participant obtains less than (4) or (4) included in the non-followers category. When score increase above (2) here the personality development occurs whereas the score increases more than (6) and participants falls in the follower's category and systematically scores increases and his personality development much rather than the less scorers as the results indicated.

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 there was difference in their mean and SD score. Neuroticism is negative personality domain the fewer score on this indicates that person has less neurotic in his personality domain rather than others. Results are given in the table 1.

The hypothesis was tested by using the T test on Extraversion 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 high score and the non-followers less score rather than the followers as well there was difference in their mean and SD score. Extraversion is positive personality domain the high score on this indicates that person has much quality of this domain rather than others. Results are given in the table 2.

The hypothesis was tested by using the T test on Openness between the flowers and non-followers the results indicated that there was highly difference between the followers and non-followers of mysticism. This also positive domain of personality that indicated that person have creation and like to new

positive experienced in life so on this domain followers obtained high score rather than the non-followers.

## CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted to explore the impact of mysticism on the personality development between the followers and the non-followers of the mysticism. The sample size of the study was (N=100) followers (n=50) and the non-followers (n=50) both were male and the both were Muslims The followers and non-followers were selected on the basis of set criteria based on 5 screening questions.

T test and correlation these tools of statistics were applied for the results of this study. T test was applied to know the difference between the followers and non-followers on the five personality domain and correlation were used to find out the relationship between the scores of follower and non-follower and the score of FFI.

Current study concluded that the mysticism has the positive effects on the development of personality. The reason is behind this that the follower if mysticism remains under the guidance and supervision of his mystic and his training process regarding his daily life remains continue along with the religious and spiritual training as well. This the main reason that the followers scored high on the (FFI )and less score on the Neuroticism. Neuroticism is the negative personality domain in the (FFI). Mysticism has the ability to develop and groom the personality of the person as the results indicated.



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