

1966

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### Recommended Citation

Tisdale, John R. and Walrath, Larry (1966) "Selected Problems in Measuring Extrinsic Religious Values," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 73(1), 332-336.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol73/iss1/48>

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## Selected Problems in Measuring Extrinsic Religious Values

JOHN R. TISDALE AND LARRY WALRATH

*Abstract.* This study deals with problems which have arisen in attempts to measure Allport's construct, extrinsically valued religion. Results here tend not to confirm the homogeneity reported for Wilson's Extrinsic Religious Values Scale, nor has a revised form correlated well enough with the original to be considered equivalent. It is concluded that if the construct is basically valid, then considerable work remains to be done on measurement and concurrent definitional revision.

The Extrinsic Religious Values Scale (ERV) was designed by Wilson (1960) to measure Allport's construct, extrinsically valued religion (Allport, 1960). To a person with an extrinsic orientation, religious devotion is not valuable in and of itself, but it rather serves such motives as security, social status, or the like. An intrinsically oriented individual, conversely, values religion for its own sake; his religious sentiment is not subservient to segmental needs or desires (Allport, 1960, 1966). The ERV consists of fifteen two-choice items; scores in the extrinsic direction result from responding to either of two types of alternatives:

One subgroup reflects an allegiance to, and dependence upon the external or institutional structures of the church . . . The other subgroup reflects a utilitarian orientation toward religion, i.e., acceptance of religion as a means. (Wilson, 1960).

Preliminary work with the ERV has indicated that it correlates substantially with a measure of anti-Semitism for several groups of church members (Wilson, 1960), that it shows low correlations with meaningful patterns of manifest needs in a college student sample (Tisdale, 1965, 1966a), and that high and low scoring students on it differ along several dimensions, most of which are consistent with the construct as defined (Tisdale, 1966b).

At the same time, however, some problems have arisen with the scale. Wilson's work suggested that the scale did not correlate as highly with religious conservatism as had been anticipated. Tisdale's studies indicated that the test was also tapping a dimension of academic aptitude or intelligence (1966b). In addition, the test's Kuder-Richardson reliability (Formula 20) of .48 for college students was not consistent with reliabilities reported by Wilson, nor does it suggest a test which is particularly homogeneous. In part because of these reasons, an attempt was made to construct a revised form of the test which would provide a more homogeneous, reliable, and ultimately valid measure of the construct.

While this decision was being made in Iowa, two other revisions of the scale were also in progress. Allport had incorporated some of the items with others into an exploratory 30 item scale to measure certain social and religious attitudes (Personal Communication, 1964). There are at present, however, no data available on the use of this questionnaire. Feagin (1964) used a 21 item Likert-type revision, in which degrees of agreement or disagreement could be expressed on a five point scale. His work indicated, among other things, that there were two factors operating to influence scores on his revised test: one which indicated acceptance or rejection of an intrinsic religious orientation, the other acceptance or rejection of an extrinsic religious style. Since these factors were independent of each other, he concluded that for his sample of Southern Baptists the Intrinsic/Extrinsic Scale was *not* unidimensional.

#### METHOD AND RESULTS

The revised form which is the subject of this study consisted of twenty items arranged in a true-false format and was entitled the Religious Values Questionnaire (RVQ). Fifteen items were derived from Wilson's ERV; two more were taken from the Allport revision; the remaining three were written expressly for the RVQ. The items were reworded in order to reduce possible response set influences, to be more appropriate for non-church members, and to provide a simpler format.

Subjects for this study were taken from 278 predominantly

Protestant college freshmen who completed one of the two forms of the questionnaire during the first week of classes. Forty-eight, by virtue of registration in a beginning psychology course, completed the alternate form approximately three weeks later. Of these 48, 20 took first the ERV and later the RVQ, 28 the RVQ and then the ERV. Another group of 41 completed the form between four and five months later, 20 taking the ERV first and 21 the RVQ.

The mean score on the ERV was 5.17 for all members of the freshmen class, 4.98 for the three-week experimental group, and 5.04 for the four-month. Corresponding means for the RVQ were 8.97, 8.52, and 8.25. Although means for the smaller subject groups appeared somewhat lower than those for the class as a whole, the difference did not reach an acceptable level of significance. The experimental samples, then, can be considered representative of the large group in this sense, at least.

Correlations were computed between the two forms for both experimental groups combined and for each separately. When considered together, the correlation was only .31. A real difference between the groups emerged, however, when they were calculated separately: for the three week time lapse  $r=.46$ , for the four month lapse,  $r=.09$  (not significant). Although all of these were disappointingly low, the second group seemed clearly to indicate the presence of a temporal instability factor as well as a form equivalence.

Inconsistencies in responses to items appearing on both forms were then analyzed: i.e., tabulations were made of answers which were changed between the tests and which resulted in individuals' being scored in both extrinsic and non-extrinsic (intrinsic) directions on parallel items. On the basis of this analysis, several things were observed. Neither the total number nor the direction of changes was significantly different for those taking the alternate form after four months than for those earlier; in both groups the general tendency was to change toward extrinsic scoring ( $\chi^2=5.80$ ,  $p<.05$ ). No significant sex differences appeared. For those taking the alternate form after three weeks, there was no relation between test order and direction of change. For those taking the forms four months apart, however, there was a very significant tendency for those taking the RVQ first to make changes toward extrinsically scored responses on the parallel items while those taking the ERV first moved away from this ( $\chi^2=21.75$ ;  $p<.001$ ). Again one notes the influence of the longer time lapse.

An examination of the specific items was made in order to determine whether particular parallel pairs of items were regularly showing changes in particular directions. Five did so. Two al-

ways tended to pull extrinsic changes, in the direction of agreeing that a chief benefit of religion (or church membership) for the test taker was security, and that churches serve chiefly to teach, guide, and protect one. Three always tended to pull changes scored intrinsically, toward agreeing that people could be religious without being church members, that man's moral concepts are not dependent on churches and that prayer is not chiefly a means of obtaining protection and benefits.

#### DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Several tentative conclusions seem to emerge from efforts thus far to measure extrinsic religious values. Although there is some tentative evidence on hand concerning scale validity, its reliability needs considerable strengthening. While Wilson's original report indicates that he had a homogeneous scale, the results of this study (and Feagin's) fail to support any such conclusion—and indeed point to the opposite.

Further, the population to be sampled by the scale items is still apparently not clearly understood, since the alternate form correlations are low. There is also seemingly some temporal instability involved as revealed by the different form correlations for the three-week and four-month groups and the difference in the effect of item form on response for the second group. Since the first test administration took place at the start of the freshmen year for the subjects, the instability may well reflect actual changes in the subjects, as well as possible error variations in the test.

When the period between the RVQ and ERV administrations was short, the RVQ true-false format and extra items tended to produce somewhat higher scores no matter what the order of administration. This tendency, however, did not follow over the longer period of time in which order of administration became an important variable: taking the RVQ first was associated with item changes in an extrinsic direction while taking the ERV first was associated with changes in an intrinsic direction. This suggests that the ERV may encourage extrinsic answers somewhat more than the RVQ in relation to its length.

The consistent differences in homogeneity for subjects here and those used by Wilson cannot easily be explained, particularly since a number of his groups involved college students also. It may be attributable to regional differences or younger age of these subjects; it may be associated with the fact that his groups were probably more active in church programs than these; it may also be a function of his sample sizes and/or formulas used in computation (which were not specified). In any case, serious

questions are raised if test homogeneity is considered to be desirable in measuring this construct.

One must be careful of score interpretation as well. The Wilson scale does not claim to measure intrinsicness nor does the Allport revision (Personal Communication, 1965). This is well, particularly in the light of the Feagin study. On the other hand, the construct of extrinsic religious values suggests strongly that its opposite, intrinsic values, is the opposite end of a single continuum. In order to provide for better measurement, some hypotheses concerning observable effects of intrinsic values need to be made along with some attempt to obtain test items which will measure these directly.

In summary, then, although the measurement of extrinsic religious values appears promising, its promise has not been realized. None of the documents produced thus far seem to be entirely satisfactory measures of the construct. If the construct is indeed basically a valid one, then considerable more work on measurement needs to be undertaken, while concurrently the concept needs to be sharpened, clarified, and probably limited in its application.

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