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A Social-Personality Perspective on Humility, Religiousness, and Spirituality

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Two studies were conducted about humility and religiousness-spirituality dimensions of the self. In Study 1, a sample of adults self-reported their religious affiliation, humility, and narcissism. We found Protestant and Catholic adults self-reported being more humble-modest than non-religious adults. In Study 2, college students self-reported humility-modesty, humility-arrogance, and religiousness-spirituality and were rated on these same qualities by a person who knew them well. Positive correlations were found between self and other-rated humility and between self-reported humility, religious values/beliefs, and religious-spiritual coping. Ratings of the participant as humble (relative to arrogant) were positively correlated with several facets of religiousness-spirituality. The magnitude of correlations was relatively unchanged when socially desirable responding was statistically controlled.

A close reading of sacred texts reveals interesting teachings about the importance of the psychological quality of humility. In a translation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* one finds sayings like, "He who brags will have no merit; he who boasts will not endure (Tzu, 1963, Ch. 24, p. 81)." In the Christian religious tradition, the New Testament parable of the guest at the feast (Luke 14: 7–11) illustrates the importance of humility for self-learning, spirituality, and social order (Barclay, 1970). Other biblical passages emphasize the importance of humility interpersonally (e.g., Philippians 2:3).

We are not the first to notice these connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality. Emmons (1999) uses trait humility as an example of spiritual intelligence. Bollinger and Hill (2012) also traced roots of humility in Buddhist and Christian faith traditions and concluded that across Eastern and Western religions, humility is a virtue marked by, "accurate self-knowledge, an acknowledgement of one's limitations and weaknesses, and opening oneself to the greater reality" (Bollinger & Hill, 2012, p. 36).

That humility is established by religions or scholars as a quality for which to strive does not necessarily make religious-spiritual persons humble. It could be that religious teachings about humility were attempts to temper self-righteousness among highly religious persons striving to be even more religious, spiritual, or holier than others. Deferring self-interest to the group, for example, may have advantages (Wilson, 1978). Hubristic pride or arrogance, on the other hand, could be detrimental to the individual or group.

In the current studies, we investigate potential connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality and ask "Are religious persons more humble or arrogant than people who do not identify with a world religion?" and "How are humility and religiousness-spirituality correlated?" At face value, both questions seem fairly easy to test. However, humility has proven to be a somewhat elusive, mercurial personality trait to define and measure (see Bollinger & Hill, 2012; Davis,

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Worthington, & Hook, 2010; Exline et al., 2004; Exline & Hill, 2012; LaBouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Tsang, & McCullough, 2012; Rowatt et al., 2006; Tangney, 2002). Religiousness-spirituality is also multi-faceted. As such, possible connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality will depend, in part, on how the concepts are operationally defined.

Humility Definitions and Measures

Conceptually, humble persons are down-to-earth, low in self-focus, and have an accurate view of self. Humble people usually do not brag and are not arrogant. Humility correlates positively with qualities like agreeableness and emotional stability, and negatively with narcissism (Rowatt et al., 2006)—but the absence of arrogance or narcissism would not necessarily make one humble (Exline et al., 2004). Existing measures often pair humility with theoretically related constructs like modesty (Exline et al., 2004), honesty (Lee & Ashton, 2004), and arrogance (Rowatt et al., 2006). To our knowledge there is not a measure of general humility distinct or independent from these other conceptually related qualities.

Religiousness-Spirituality Definition and Measures

Unlike humility, for which there are only a handful of measures, there are hundreds of different self-report measures of religiousness-spirituality (cf. Hill & Hood, 1999) ranging from categorical items (e.g., religious affiliation, theism) to multi-item scales that assess motivations for religious behaviors, attachment to a divine agent, how rigidly or flexibly one holds certain religiousness beliefs (e.g., religious fundamentalism, doctrinal orthodoxy), and religious coping. Our primary focus will be on general religiousness-spirituality rather than these other aspects, although these are potentially important concepts for future comparisons with humility.

Overview

Two studies investigated possible connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality dimensions of the self. In Study 1, adults self-reported their religious affiliation, humility, and narcissism. Mean-level humility was compared between Christians and persons who identified with no religion (i.e., nones). Presumably persons who internalize religious teachings and values about humility (e.g., Christians) will report being more humble than people who do not internalize religious teachings about humility (i.e., irreligious persons). We also explored associations between humility and some individual differences (e.g., gender, age, education). In Study 2, college students self-reported humility-modesty, humility-arrogance, religiousness-spirituality, and social desirability; then a person who knew them well rated their humility and religiousness-spirituality. Our primary hypotheses were that religious persons report being more humble than non-religious persons (Study 1) and that self and other-reported humility and religiousness-spirituality correlate positively (Study 2).

Study 1

Participants

A small sample of 120 adults from the United States completed an online survey that included measures of religious affiliation, humility and narcissism. Because so few participants identified with some religions [i.e., Buddhist ($n = 2$), Hindu ($n = 2$), Jewish ($n = 2$), Baha'i ($n = 1$), Mormon ($n = 1$), Wiccan ($n = 1$), spiritual ($n = 1$)], we decided to restrict our analyses to 110 individuals who identified as Protestant ($n = 32$), Catholic ($n = 29$), or None ($n = 49$). The final sample was comprised of 68 women and 42 men ($M_{age} = 35$ yrs, $SD_{age} = 14$ yrs) and was somewhat diverse with regard to race/ethnicity (76.4% White, 8.2% Black, 7.3% Asian, 4.5% Hispanic, 3.6% another race/ethnicity) and socio-economic status (17% lower class, 31% lower middle class, 40% middle class, 11% upper middle class, 1% upper class). The average years of education completed was 15 ($SD = 2.43$).

Measures and Procedure

Participants were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk and paid $0.25. *Humility-modesty* was assessed with the 10-item subscale from the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson & Seligman, 2004, $\alpha = .83$; 1 = very much unlike me, 5 = very much like me; example item "I rarely call attention to myself.") *Humility-arrogance* (Rowatt et al., 2006, $\alpha = .78$) was measured with seven 7-point semantic differential items between the following end-labels: humble/arrogant, modest/immodest, respectful/disrespectful, egotistical/not self-centered, conceited/not conceited, intolerant/tolerant, and closed-minded/open-minded. The first three items were reverse-scored before summing ratings. Higher scores on this variable indicate more self-reported humility relative to arrogance. *Narcissism* was assessed with the 40-item, forced-choice version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988; $\alpha = .91$). Participants received one point for each narcis-

sistic response. An example forced-choice pair reads, "I am much like everybody else. I am an extraordinary person." To assess religious identification participants were asked, "What is your primary religious affiliation?" Response options included Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, None, and a free response category "other religion."

Results and Discussion

ANOVAs with Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons were used to compare the scale scores of Protestants, Catholics, and Nones. As detailed in Table 1, Protestants and Catholics reported being more humble-modest than Nones, [$F(2, 104) = 3.15$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = .057$] and marginally more humble relative to arrogant than Nones, [$F(2, 105) = 2.84$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = .051$]. No differences between Christians and non-religious persons were found with regard to narcissism scale scores.

Men and women did not differ in self-reported humility or narcissism. Age was negatively correlated with narcissism ($r = -.28$, $p = .004$) and essentially uncorrelated with humility-modesty ($r = .06$) and humility-arrogance ($r = -.02$). Years of education completed was negatively correlated with humility-modesty ($r = -.21$, $p = .029$) and humility-arrogance ($r = -.27$, $p = .004$), but not with narcissism ($r = .10$). It could be that as people become more educated, they gain more knowledge, or believe they know it all. Longitudinal data are needed to better test whether or how humility and narcissism change as people age or become more educated. A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies indicates little change in agreeableness with age (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer , 2006). Narcissism scale scores, however, appear to be on the rise among college students (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008).

Study 1 has a few notable limits. For example, we assessed religiousness categorically instead of dimensionally and relied solely on self-report. People who identify as Christian, for example, likely vary in degree of religiousness. Also, a person could easily self-report being more humble or religious, or less arrogant or narcissistic than they are or than others perceive. In a college student sample, for example, highly religious students displayed more self-other bias than less religious students (Rowatt, Ottenbreit, Nesselroade, & Cunningham, 2002). To investigate further how humility and religiousness-spirituality correlate, we conducted a second study using both self and other report methods and dimensional measures.

Study 2

Previous research shows self-reported humility correlated positively with the importance of religion-spirituality across three studies ($r's = .34$ to $.55$; Exline & Hill, 2012). However, one challenge about studying relationships between humility and religiousness-spirituality is that both constructs are desirable, positive qualities to many people (Exline & Geyer, 2004; Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010). In most Western samples, consistently more than half rate themselves to be above average on desirable, positive qualities (Brown, 1986; Myers, 1995). On self-report measures, people could easily report being more religious, spiritual, or humble than they are in attempts to appear desirable or virtuous. To scientists and practitioners interested in studying or cultivating humility, that a person might not accurately report humility is problematic.

Can We Accurately Measure Humility?

Personality researchers, ourselves included, typically trust participant self-report. Tangney (2002, p. 415) however, suggested that "humility may represent

TABLE 1

Humility Scale Scores for Christian Religious and Non-Religious Groups

	Protestant		*Catholic*		*No Religion*	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Humility-modesty	3.64_a	0.72	3.78_a	0.50	3.41_b	0.67
Humility-arrogance	5.69_a	0.69	5.75_a	0.78	5.34_a	0.90
Narcissism	10.90_a	6.78	11.70_a	7.49	11.79_a	8.30

Note. Each row represents a separate ANOVA. Row means with different subscripts are statistically different (Tukey HSD tests; $p < .05$).

a rare personality construct that is simply unamenable to direct self-report methods." In light of this possibility, we opted to gather both self and other-ratings of humility and religiousness-spirituality, and self-reported socially desirable responding. We do not contend that self or other-reported humility is the accurate or true measure, but do think an estimate from an outside source will provide an important point of comparison.

It was not entirely clear at the outset how self or other ratings of humility would correlate. Two existing findings were mixed with regard to self-other agreement about humility. Rowatt et al. (2006) found positive correlations between self and other-rated humility among people who knew each other, using a variety of measures of humility. Davis et al. (2012) found a negative correlation ($r = -.31$) between self and other-rated humility in a social relations model study. Although we are not sure why directionally opposite relationships were found, it could be that when humility is challenged or strained in a social situation among relative strangers during the course of three hours (see Davis et al., 2012) different social dynamics (e.g., competitiveness, self-presentation concerns) produce less humble behaviors that lead to eventual disagreement between self and other about a target's humility. Another possibility is that people may become fatigued and find it difficult to self-regulate humility, in which case a person could think the self is humble most of the time, but not behave in a humble way when humility is strained in a group task. When self and other-ratings are collected at different times (which will be done in Study 2), respondents may think about how the target usually behaves. We predict measures of humility and religiousness-spirituality correlate positively (when self and other-report are collected at different times) even when socially desirable responding is statistically controlled.

Method

Participants

Sixty-three college students (51 women; $M_{age} = 19$ yrs, $SD_{age} = 1.2$ yrs) completed a paper survey individually in a quiet psychology research lab. The sample was somewhat diverse ethnically (67% White, 14% Hispanic, 8% Black, 7% Asian, 2% Native American, 2% selected other as their race/ethnicity). Participants were predominantly Protestant (60%) or Catholic (24%; 5% no religion, 5% other religion, 3% Buddhist, 1.5% Jewish, 1.5% Muslim).

Self-Report Measures

Participants completed the same self-report measures of humility-modesty ($\alpha = .82$) and humility-arrogance ($\alpha = .77$) described in Study 1. In an attempt to capture more breadth with regard to personal religiousness-spirituality (than the categorical religious affiliation item used in Study 1) participants completed the Fetzer (1999) Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality and some single items about general religiousness and spirituality (i.e., "To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?" and "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?" 1 = not at all, 4 = very much). The Fetzer (1999) measure of religiousness-spirituality includes multi-item subscales that tap daily spiritual experience ($\alpha = .89$), forgiveness ($\alpha = .65$), private religious practices ($\alpha = .77$), religious-spiritual coping ($\alpha = .70$), religious social support ($\alpha = .61$), and religious meaning ($\alpha = .69$). Two items assess religious values/beliefs ($\alpha = .42$; inter-item $r = .27$).

Because humility and religiousness-spirituality were theorized to be positive qualities, we also included the 20-item impression management subscale of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus & Reid, 1991; $\alpha = .63$). Items were rated on a 7-point rating scale (1 = not true; 7 = very true). Participants received one-point for each 6 or 7 and 0 for each response ≤5.

Other-Report by Friend/Acquaintance

To gather other-report ratings, participants delivered a brief paper survey and stamped envelope to a friend (63%), roommate (16%), romantic partner (7%), or other person of their choosing. The other person completed and returned the survey by mail to a research assistant. The other-report survey included the same measures of humility-modesty ($\alpha = .80$), humility-arrogance ($\alpha = .90$), and single-items to assess the traits *religious* and *spiritual*. Scale items were slightly reworded (e.g., "I" was changed to "s/he). "Others" were also asked how long they had known the participant, their perceived closeness (1 = not at all; 7 = very close), liking (1 = do not like at all; 7 = like very much), similarity to the participant (1 = not at all similar; 7 = very similar), and how easy or difficult it was to rate the participant's humility-arrogance (1 = easy; 7 = difficult). These relational characteristics were assessed because people who are liked typically receive more positive personality trait ratings from others (Srivastava & Beer, 2005). Time known, perceived closeness,

and perceived similarity could also increase a rater's knowledge about the participant.

Results

Given the small number of religious "Nones" in this college student sample (n = 5), we opted not to compute mean-level comparisons similar to Study 1. Rather, correlations were computed (see Table 2).

Correlations between Self-Report Measures

Self-reported humility-modesty and humility-arrogance correlated positively (r = .38). Humility-modesty correlated about .30 with daily spiritual experiences, private religious practices, values/beliefs, religious-spiritual coping, and meaning. Humility-arrogance correlated positively with religious-spiritual coping, values/beliefs, and impression management. Neither humility dimension was significantly correlated with perceived religious social support.

The magnitude of correlations remained largely unchanged when impression-management (IM) was statistically controlled, with a few exceptions. The partial correlation between humility-modesty and humility-arrogance was a bit lower (pr = .31); humility-modesty was no longer significantly correlated with daily spiritual experience (pr = .22), or religious-spiritual coping (pr = .23). These partial correlations should be interpreted with some caution because of the somewhat low internal consistency estimate of the IM subscale in this study (α = .63). In most other studies the IM scale has acceptable internal consistency (i.e., α > .70).

Correlations between Self-Reported and Other-Reported Humility and Religiousness-Spirituality

The other-report sample was demographically similar to the participant sample (M_{age} = 19 yrs, SD_{age} = 4.19 yrs, 53% female). "Others" rated knowing the participant for an average of three years (SD = 4.44 yrs). On 7-point scales, "others" reported being quite close to the participant (M = 5.18, SD = 1.41), liking the participant (M = 6.35, SD = 1.06), and being similar (M = 4.78, SD = 1.44). "Others" perceived it to be fairly easy to rate the participant's humility-arrogance (M = 2.48, SD = 1.39).

As shown in Table 3, self and other-reported humility-modesty and humility-arrogance correlated positively ($r \approx .40$). Self and other-reported religiousness-spirituality also correlated positively (rs .46 to .58). We also computed intraclass correlations (ICC) between the self and other ratings of each measure completed by both participants and other-raters using fully unconditional hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). The ICCs were as follows: VIA humility-modesty ICC = .35; humility-arrogance semantic differentials ICC = .38; single-item religiousness ICC = .56; and single-item spirituality ICC = .46. This is further evidence for moderate to high consistency between self and other-reported humility and religiousness spirituality in this sample.

TABLE 2

Correlations Between Self-Reported Humility and Self-Reported Religiousness-Spirituality

Measures	1	2	3	4
1. VIA humility-modesty	—			
2. Humility-arrogance	.38**	—		
3. Religious (single-item)	.16	−.12	—	
4. Spiritual (single-item)	.10	.00	.72**	—
5. Daily spiritual experiences	.30*	.10	.63**	.59**
6. Values/beliefs	.29*	.30*	.07	.12
7. Forgiveness	.21	.47**	.03	.18
8. Private religious practices	.26+	.05	.63**	.50**
9. Religious & spiritual coping	.31*	.34*	.44**	.50**
10. Religious social support	.12	.09	.44**	.26+
11. Religious meaning	.34*	.19	.47**	.53**
12. Impression management	.28+	.32*	.12	.06

Note. To save space, we opted not to include the entire triangular correlation matrix.
** p < .01. * p < .05. + p < .10.

TABLE 3

Bivariate and (Partial) Correlations Between Self and Other Rated Humility, Religiousness, and Spirituality

	Ratings by a Close Other							
	Humility-modesty		Humility-arrogance		Religious		Spiritual	
Participant Self-Report	*r*	*pr*	*r*	*pr*	*r*	*pr*	*r*	*pr*
VIA-IS humility-modesty (10-items)	.40*	(.35*)	.32*	(.31*)	.19	(.11)	.21	(.12)
Humility-arrogance semantic differential (7-items)	.41*	(.36*)	.38*	(.36*)	.10	(.00)	.09	(−.03)
Religiousness (single-item)	.27+	(.25)	.21	(.20)	.58**	(.57**)	.52***	(.51**)
Spirituality (single-item)	.24	(.23)	.45**	(.44**)	.46**	(.47**)	.46**	(.47**)

Note. Partial correlations (pr) in parenthesis statistically controlled for impression management. VIA-IS = Values in Action Inventory of Strengths. Intraclass correlations are reported in the text.

** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

We also noticed self-reported religiousness and spirituality were positively correlated with other-reported humility but that self-reported humility only weakly correlated with other-reported religiousness-spirituality. Perhaps religious-spiritual persons are perceived to be humble, but humble persons are not necessarily perceived to be religious-spiritual.

As shown in Table 4, we found some notable correlations between other-reported humility and participant religiousness-spirituality when multi-item measures of religiousness-spirituality were examined. For example, other rated humility-arrogance (column 2) correlated positively with every component of participants' self-reported religiousness-spirituality except religious social support. Other rated humility-modesty (column 1) correlated positively with the participants' self-reported religious values/beliefs and religious meaning. The strength of these statistical relationships remained largely unchanged when self-reported impression management was included as a covariate.

Next, we explored associations between different aspects of the personal relationship between the participants, other-raters, and humility. Participants' self-reported humility-modesty, humility-arrogance, religiousness, and spirituality were not significantly correlated with the other-raters estimates of years known, closeness, liking, similarity, or difficulty of rating humility. The degree of liking (reported by "others") correlated positively with other-reported humility-modesty ($r = .34$, $p = .031$) and humility-arrogance ($r = .44$, $p < .001$). Reported difficulty of rating the participants' humility was negatively correlated with other-rated humility-arrogance ($r = -.29$, $p = .022$) and perceived liking ($r = -.34$, $p = .006$), but not as strongly with other rated humility-modesty ($r = -.19$), perceived closeness ($r = -.24$, $p = .057$), perceived similarity ($r = -.16$) or years known ($r = -.09$). Moderate positive relationships between self and other-rated humility-modesty ($\beta = .395$, $p = .012$), humility-arrogance ($\beta = .31$, $p = .044$), religiousness ($\beta = .58$, $p < .001$), and spirituality ($\beta = .40$, $p = .001$) remained when years known, perceived closeness, perceived similarity, and ease/difficulty of rating humility (as reported "others") were statistically controlled in a regression analyses.

Discussion

Study 2 reveals some positive relationships between measures of humility and religiousness-spirituality. Increases in self-reported humility are associated with small, positive increases in self-reported religiousness-spirituality and vice-versa. For example, self-perceived humility correlates positively with overt religious practices, more philosophical qualities like religious values/beliefs and religious meaning in life, and the degree to which people turn to religion or God in times of need (i.e., religious-spiritual coping).

Increases in self-reported religiousness-spirituality were also associated with small, positive increases in other-reported humility (relative to arrogance). That is, people who rated themselves as more religious-spiritual on several dimensions (e.g., religious values/beliefs, religious meaning, daily religious practices) were perceived to be more humble (less arrogant) by a close friend. This is preliminary evidence that reli-

TABLE 4

Correlations Between Other-Reported Humility and Self-Reported Religiousness-Spirituality

Measures	1	2	3	4
Other-Reported Humility and RS				
1. O_VIA humility-modesty	—			
2. O_Humility-arrogance	.68**	—		
3. O_Religious (single-item)	.58**	.50**	—	
4. O_Spiritual (single-item)	.60**	.54**	.90**	—
Self-Reported Religiousness-Spirituality				
5. Daily spiritual experiences	.25	.42*	.57**	.40**
6. Values/beliefs	.31*	.59**	.22	.18
7. Forgiveness	.02	.34*	.13	.16
8. Private religious practices	.25	.41**	.66**	.55**
9. Religious & spiritual coping	.23	.41**	.44**	.26+
10. Religious social support	.21	.23	.44**	.43**
11. Religious meaning	.37*	.45**	.47**	.31*

Note. O = other-reported; RS = religiousness-spirituality. To save space, we opted not to include the entire triangular correlation matrix.
** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$.

gious-spiritual people are perceived by others to be humble.

Similar to Rowatt et al. (2006), we found self and other-reported humility correlate positively and remained positively correlated when desirable responding was statistically controlled. A previous finding that self and other-reported humility correlated negatively (Davis et al., 2012) could be due to a lack of closeness or liking between the participant and other-raters. It could also be that behaving in a humble or modest way requires self-control. When psychological resources are depleted, impression-management becomes difficult and deteriorates (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciaracco, 2005). Even a humble person, when depleted, stressed, or fatigued could find it difficult to self-regulate (e.g., take turns talking, refrain from boasting, or inhibit egotistical acts). Perhaps assessing humility in more sterile or separated personality testing conditions among acquaintances (cf. Rowatt et al., 2006) produces conditions for self-other agreement about a target's trait humility but straining humility among strangers in a longer session (3 hours; Davis et al., 2012) creates conditions for self-other disagreement.

We also find that other-reported humility relative to arrogance and multiple dimensions of religiousness-spirituality correlate positively, which provides further evidence of the connection between the two constructs. Some overlap between the constructs could be due to common-method variance or other-raters' attempts to create a desirable impression of the participant rated (Schlenker & Britt, 1999).

Finally, we find evidence that people perceived to be humble are liked by others, which fits with previous findings that being liked leads to more favorable ratings from others (Srivastava & Beer, 2005), that perceived humility correlates positively with degree of acceptance and status in a group (Davis et al., 2012), and that college students generally perceive humility to be a positive quality (Exline & Geyer, 2004).

Limits and Future Directions

A few limits and future directions merit discussion. Study 2 included a relatively small, non-representative sample of college students. Future research should include participants across the life-span. Humility could be a personal quality that increases with age. A longitudinal study would be of great use to test this idea and we encourage personality researchers to include a brief measure of humility in future longitudinal studies.

Another limit of the current article is the conceptualization of religion-spirituality from a Western perspective. An important future direction is to explore connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality from Eastern philosophical or religious perspectives (e.g., Buddhist, Taoist, etc.) and other religious and cultural traditions (cf. Bollinger & Hill, 2012).

We also suggest that researchers not rely solely on self-report methods to assess participant humility. In a sample of Cistercian nuns and monks, only 5% said that they were very successful at, "always exhibiting humility in one's heart and anywhere else" (Smith, 2006). Admitting being humble could be a sign of conceit inconsistent with a deeply spiritual sense of self. Lewis (1952/2001, p. 128) thought, "if you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed." Spiritually wise persons may realize the paradox of self-reporting humility and under-report their own humility. This could create a pattern in which older religious or spiritual persons report being less humble, which could be corroborated with other-report data.

In an attempt to circumvent some limits of self-reporting humility, Davis, Hook and their colleagues (2010, 2011) developed relational humility and spiritual humility scales that involve rating the humility of another person (i.e., he/she is a humble person). The relational method is producing important findings.

The social relations model is another promising method (cf. Davis et al., 2012; Kenny, 1994). Typically researchers bring small groups of four together to interact for a brief time; then to collect round-robin ratings of self and others' on traits of interest. Using this method, Meagher and Kenny (2013) found self-other agreement with regard to religious commitment of participants. Davis et al. (2012) did not find self-other agreement with regard to the relational humility of participants. With three other-raters consensus estimates can be computed. Consensus estimates among long-term acquaintances for personality qualities like extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and culture/openness ranged from .26 to .29 (Kenny, Albright, Malloy, & Kashy, 1994). However, consensus between judges of personality is typically higher for observable traits like extraversion and lower for less observable traits like agreeableness (Kenny et al., 1994; Vazire, 2010). With a trait like humility we wonder whether long-term acquaintances are better than zero-acquaintance judges. We speculate consensus about whether a person is humble is lower at zero-acquaintance but emerges after knowing the person for an extended time.

Quasi-experimental methodologies could also yield important discoveries as well. For example, experiments that prime religion or spirituality or that increase religious salience could help tease apart a potentially causal relationship between religiousness-spirituality and humility. It could be the case that religious people behave in humble-modest ways when religiousness-spirituality is made salient, but less so when this aspect of identity is not active.

General Discussion

These two studies point to mean-level differences in humility-modesty between religious and non-religious persons as well as positive associations between measures of humility and religiousness-spirituality. That is, Christians reported being more humble-modest than people who do not identify with a religion. Among college students, self-reported humility and religiousness-spirituality correlated positively. Likewise, other-reported humility and religiousness-spirituality correlated positively, which provides some corroboration of the participants' self-reports.

Given the observed connections between humility and religiousness-spirituality, we wonder how one might cultivate personal humility. According to Lewis (1952/2001), the first step is to realize one is proud. By this we interpret Lewis meant that it is important to be aware of one's egocentrism or arrogance. Other forms of perspective-taking could be important. Kross and Grossman (2012) found that cuing people to think from a distanced perspective (vs. immersed) increased intellectual humility. Perhaps something about taking a more distanced perspective of the self, others, relationships, and situations would also increase humility in other domains.

Religions and sacred texts appear to hold some keys for cultivating humility, as well. Some religious-spiritual behaviors (e.g., meditative prayer, being in a sacred space) involve quieting the mind or ego which could create conditions in which one becomes more aware of personal finitude or a feeling of spiritual transcendence. Finally, one could strive to follow the advice of religious-spiritual sages and not brag, boast, take a seat of importance, or count the self to be better than others. Over time, being more reflective or simply behaving in a humble way could lead to habits that increase humility.

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