



# Examining the Relationship Between Religiosity and Fearlessness About Death



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## Introduction

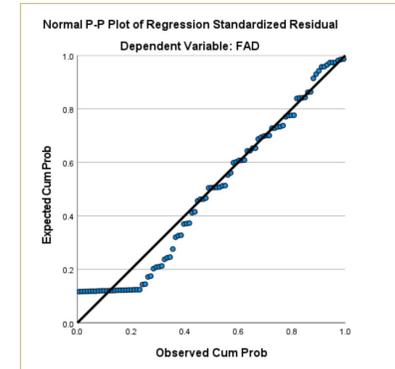
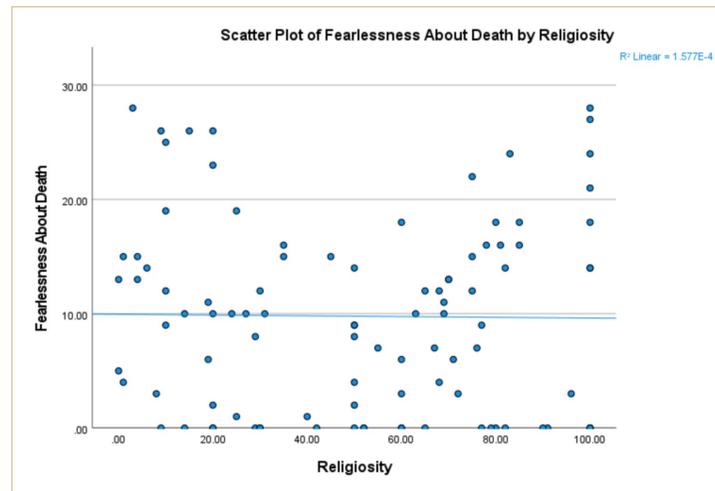
- This study aimed to answer the question of whether a relationship between religiosity and fearlessness about death (FAD) exists.
- Religiosity and its implications for mental health and disorders including depression and substance abuse have been researched, with findings indicating positive correlations between religiosity and mental health, less depression, and suicide (Bonelli et al., 2013). Due to the inevitable role of death in people's lives, it seems only natural that its relationship and role with religion have been investigated.
- FAD has been researched for its implications in acquired capability for suicide as proposed in the interpersonal theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden, 2010).
- Existing research has focused on the association between religiosity and fear of death with various relationships found, recent studies had mostly positive correlations (Ellis & Wahab, 2013).
- The specific construct of FAD and its relationship to religiosity had not been investigated previously.
- It was hypothesized that there would be a negative association between religiosity and FAD with a medium effect size.

## Participants

- 118 undergraduate students were sampled from Florida State University.
- Age ranged from 18 to 22 ( $M = 18.78$ ,  $SD = 1.106$ ).
- 64% were female, majority reported Single, not Hispanic or Latino/a, White, Heterosexual, and Christian.
- Over half were in their first year of study.

## Measures

- Participants were asked "What is the depth of your religious belief?" to measure their religious depth. Responses were measured through a sliding scale, with the left end indicating Minimum depth, and the right Maximum depth. Scores could range from 0-100.
- The Acquired Capability Suicide Scale—Fearlessness About Death Scale (ACSS-FAD) was used to measure fearlessness about death through 7 items with a 5-point Likert scale. Total scores ranged from 0-28, with higher scores indicating greater fearlessness about death.



## Results

- Based on the results, our hypothesis was not supported. There was a non-significant correlation between religiosity and FAD,  $r(96) = -.01$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ,  $SEM = 8.32$ ,  $p = .903$ .
- Scores for religiosity ranged from 0 to 100, ( $M = 50.89$ ,  $SD = 31.49$ ). Scores for FAD ranged from 0 to 28, ( $M = 8.25$ ,  $SD = 8.34$ ).
- A linear regression analysis showed that fearlessness about death indicated no regression on religiosity ( $b < -.001$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $\beta = -.01$ ,  $t(96) = -.12$ , 95% CI [-0.06, 0.05]).

## Conclusion

- While previous studies have examined the association between religiosity and death, with findings supporting a variety of relationship types, this study sought to determine if the specific constructs of religiosity and FAD were related.
- Although a negative relationship with medium effect size was predicted, results indicated a nonsignificant relationship adding to existing research where no significant relationships were found.

## Procedure

- The online survey platform Qualtrics was used to present all parts of this study, where participants responded.
- Power analysis recommended sample size of 36. The present analysis involved 118 participants, providing a large enough sample size to detect real effects, assuming an effect size,  $f$ , of at least 0.2. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Findings were considered statistically significant for  $p$  values less than or equal to 0.05.
- Frequency analyses were conducted on sex, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, marital status, religious affiliation, attendance of religious services, time spent with other people outside of religious places of worship, military, and current year of study in college.
- Descriptive analyses were conducted on the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation for religiosity, FAD, and age.
- A linear regression analysis was conducted on religiosity and FAD, with religiosity as the independent variable and FAD as the dependent variable.

## Future Directions

- Further studies investigating religiosity and FAD could measure religiosity through more than depth, by asking questions about religious practices, habits, and beliefs
- It would be helpful to see if future studies with a more diverse, older, or different regional population would produce similar results.

## References

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