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Personality, Religiosity and Gender Correlates of Self-Assessed Lie and Truth Related Abilities

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Abstract

This study examined the predictions of personality dimensions on self-assessed communication abilities to tell and detect lies, tell truths, and believe others. Eighty people from a religious Jewish community (41 females and 39 males), and eighty secular Israelis (40 females and 40 males), were asked to evaluate their lie-truth related abilities relative to others and completed the Big Five personality inventory (BFI). It was found that lower levels of Agreeableness and lower levels of Neuroticism contributed to lie-telling ability assessments. Lower levels of Agreeableness predicted lie-detection and truth telling ability ratings. Believing was driven by higher levels of Agreeableness. Results further indicated that participants overestimated their truth-telling and believing abilities. Secular but not religious participants overestimated their lie-telling and lie-detection abilities, too. Religious male and female participants underestimated their lie-telling abilities. Secular males rated their lie-telling ability higher than secular females. The results were explained, and possible implications were discussed.

Keywords

Big-Five, Self-Assessed Lying Abilities, Truths, Religiosity, Gender

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1. Introduction

How people understand and feel about their abilities to tell the truth convincingly, to trust others, to tell convincing lies and detect lies of others, may contribute to social success in many life situations. People tend to trust others to maintain social bonds. They use their truth-telling skills to convince others of their veracity. They protect themselves from false threats and promises by using their lie-detection skills. Finally, they fudge from time to time (Ariely, 2012) to maintain the plausibility of their messages. In this context, the concept of self-efficacy is central. Bandura (1977, 1986), suggested that self-efficacy is people's belief in their ability to accomplish their goals in certain situations. Bandura described these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel. Following Bandura, it is suggested that various aspects of the perceived lie-truth telling abilities may affect people's thinking, feelings, and behavior in situations where these perceived abilities are relevant. However, research on the perceived lie-truth related abilities is in its creation. The current study is designed to extend our knowledge of how self-assessment of the lie-truth-related abilities is linked with personality traits, and how religiosity and gender mediate these effects.

2. Background

2.1. Biases in Self-Assessed Abilities to Tell and Detect Lies, Tell Truths, and Believe Others

Given that bias refers to a conscious or unconscious inclination that inhibits impartial judgment of the self (Kwan, Kuang & Hui, 2009), biases in the self-assessments of telling the truth convincingly, identify truths told by another person,

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deliver lies and detect them in others, have been examined before (e.g., Elaad, 2009, 2010). For example, earlier studies have shown that many people overate their own ability to detect lies (Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991; Elaad, 2003). This bias fits the general human assumption that most communications are truthful and that if they are not, their lack of veracity can be unveiled. Furthermore, people hate to think that others can easily deceive them and reciprocate when they feel deceived (Tyler, Feldman & Reichrt, 2006). By inflating their self-assessed ability to detect lies, they defend themselves from such inconveniences. People are confident of their ability to convince receivers of their truthful communication. This is because truth telling is believed to be a simple matter of "telling it like it is" (Buller & Burgon, 1994). People are also inclined to rate their lie-telling ability rather low. One explanation is that examples of difficult lies and simple truths are more available than easily formulated lies or hard-to-tell truths (DePaulo et al., 2003). Furthermore, being a poor liar seems to be beneficial as it supports one's view of oneself as a basically honest person. Finally, people tend to inflate their ability to trust others because calling a truth-teller "liar" is a serious accusation that triggers feelings of guilt and often ends the communication.

Based on earlier results, it is hypothesized that the present participants will overrate their lie-detecting, truth-telling, and believing abilities, but not their lie-telling ability.

2.2. The Big Five Predictions for Self-Assessed Lie-Truth Related Abilities

To examine whether personality traits predict self-assessments of lie-truth-related abilities, we used one of the dominant models of personality trait structure, the Big Five (McCrae & Costa, 1997; John & Srivastava, 1999) a commonly accepted taxonomy for classifying personality. This structure has generalized across cultures, sources of ratings, and measures (e.g., John & Srivastava, 1999; Schmitt, Realo, Voracek & Allik, 2008). According to the Big Five, five orthogonal dimensions capture the full range of personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and, Conscientiousness. These traits can be good candidates for predicting self-assessed lie-true-related abilities.

Extraversion covers traits such as energy, positive emotions, assertiveness, sociability, the tendency to seek stimulation with others and talkativeness (McCrae, & Costa, 1997). Extroverts are drawn to social life and therefore have more opportunities to lie and detect lies in others. Indeed, Kashy and DePaulo (1996) reported that extroverts are more inclined to tell lies than introverts who have fewer social opportunities. Over time, such sociable people gain experience in lying and improve their skills to lie convincingly. Thus, lie-telling is likely to become easier, more successful, and more habitual (i.e., they notice their lies less). In support, an earlier study (Elaad & Reizer, 2015), indicated that Extraversion predicted higher assessments of the lie-telling ability.

Elaad and Reizer (2015) further linked Extraversion with high lie-detecting and truth telling assessments. Therefore, it is expected that extroverts will self-assess their lie-telling and lie-detecting abilities higher than introverts. The experience of extroverts in social interactions and their self-perception as good persuaders (Barrick & Mount, 1991) suggests that extroverts would also rate high their truth-telling ability.

Openness to experience reflects a strong degree of intellectual curiosity, independent thinking, creativity, and a preference for novelty and variety. Openness to experience is also described as the extent to which a person is imaginative or independent and depicts a personal preference for a variety of activities over a strict routine (Barrick & Mount, 1991). People high in openness are motivated to engage in intellectual pursuits (Moutafi, Furnham & Crump, 2006), and openness is positively associated with emotional intelligence (Mclntyre, 2010). Elaad and Reizer (2015) associated openness to experience with higher assessments of the lie telling and lie detection abilities. Following Elaad and Reizer we expect to find similar associations.

Conscientiousness combines features such as an individual's tendency to demonstrate self-discipline, and act in a dutiful, organized, and achievement-oriented manner. Conscientiousness people tend to plan rather than be spontaneous and are organized and dependable. Conscientiousness and related features such as responsibility and prudence showed a negative association with actual cheating and pro-cheating attitudes (e.g., Day, Hudson, Dobies & Waris, 2011), honesty (Horn, Nelson, & Brannick, 2004) and authentic behavior (Gillath, Sesko, Shaver & Chun, 2010). Research conducted in industrial settings has shown that low Conscientiousness individuals exhibit a persistent pattern of dishonest behaviors, such as theft, rule breaking and other irresponsible behaviors (Salgado, 2002). Elaad and Reizer (2015) reported that Conscientiousness was negatively associated with lie-telling assessments. Taken together, we hypothesize that Conscientiousness is positively associated with the self-assessed ability to convey the truth and negatively associated with the self-assessed ability to tell lies convincingly.

Agreeableness refers to being helpful, cooperative, and sympathetic towards others. Agreeable people consider themselves nice, friendly, and trustworthy (McCrae & Costa, 1997). This trait is associated with the tendency to be

genuine and not “fake” especially in one’s relationships (Gillath et al., 2010). Elaad and Reizer (2015) obtained a positive association between Agreeableness and the assessment of the believing ability and negative association between Agreeableness and lie-telling, lie-detecting and truth-telling assessments. Taken together, individuals who score high on Agreeableness are expected to assess low their lie-telling and lie detecting abilities and self-assess high their believing ability.

Neuroticism is characterized by easily experience of low self-confidence, pessimism, negative emotions, sadness, anxiety, and irritability, and a diminished ability to cope with stress, such as anger, anxiety, or depression. Neuroticism also refers to the degree of an individual's emotional stability and impulse control (McCrae & Costa, 1997). People ranked high on Neuroticism tend to lie more than other people (Conrads, Irlenbusch & Rilke, 2013), and tend to cheat more than their less neurotic counterparts (Kisamore, Stone & Jawahar, 2007). However, another study found no relations between Neuroticism and cheating (e.g., Nathanson, Paulhus & Williams, 2006). Elaad and Reizer (2015) obtained that individuals who scored high on Neuroticism rated low their lie-telling ability. Neuroticism is related to the frequent experience of failure because neurotic individuals do not persist when facing difficulties. This predicts low self-assessment of all lie-truth-related abilities.

2.3. Religiosity

The present study extends Elaad and Reizers' (2015) results to religiosity under the assumption that religiosity may further affect the assessments of lie-truth related communication skills. Religion is an eminently collective thing (Durkheim, 1965) and it encourages collectivism, which emphasizes values that promote the welfare of the in-group over values that promote individual goals (Sagy, Orr & Bar-On, 1999). In Israel religion is deeply rooted in the socialization of early childhood, and its rituals mark the day, the year, and the stages in life that create an emotional bond between the members of the religious community (Sagy et al., 1999). The religious marker emphasizes in-group collectivism, which is reflected in shared values, interests, and even daily matters such as clothing, food, daily agenda, and behavior. Ariely (2012) argued that the use of religious symbols is a way to increase honesty. Ariely described an experiment in which students were asked to recall the Ten Commandments and were then tempted to cheat. Results indicated that the students cheated less than a control group that was asked to recall ten books they had read in high school. Ariely concluded that participants' attempt to recall moral standards was enough to improve moral behavior.

Religious people may be less cognitively flexible than their secular counterparts. Cognitive flexibility is the ability to restructure knowledge in multiple ways depending on changing situational demands (Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson & Coulson, 1995). Ariely used the term cognitive flexibility to describe how people manage to live with two conflicting motivations. On the one hand, they want to benefit from cheating and on the other hand, they continue to consider themselves as honest people, so they "fudge". The fudge effect can be expected to operate on secular people when they are asked to assess their lie-telling ability. They tend to overrate this ability without compromising their sense of honesty and overrate their truth related abilities (believing and truth telling) as well. The cognitive flexibility of religious people is blocked by religious rules. Since lying is condemned by these rules religious people will underrate their lie-telling ability to preserve their honesty.

2.4. Gender

Another possible mediator that may account for differences in the self-assessed lie-truth related abilities is Gender. A meta-analysis of scales from widely used personality inventories from 1940 to 1992 (Feingold, 1994), showed, that females scored slightly but consistently higher than males on scales of trust. It is therefore suggested that females believe more than males in other people's honesty and in their positive intentions and would assign higher believing skills to themselves. Males reported more frequent lying than females and scored higher on the Social Adroitness scale which was designed to locate ambitious persons skilled at persuading others in a subtle diplomatic way (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). In support, Gneezy, Niederle and Rustichini (2003) demonstrated that women are less effective than men in competitive environments. They are, however, equally effective in noncompetitive environments. Continuing this line of reasoning, the more ambitious males are expected to rate their lie-telling ability higher than females because the ability to lie successfully is necessary to succeed in a competitive environment and males would be happy to add this ability to their repertoire of traits. Sweeney and Ceci (2014) reported no gender differences in the ability to detect lies. No hypothesis regarding gender differences with respect to lie-detecting ability, was made. Similarly, there is no reason to believe that gender differences would exist in the self-assessed truth-telling ability.

In an earlier study, Elaad (2015) examined gender differences in self-assessments of lie-telling and lie-detecting abilities. Forty male and 40 female students participated in this study. Male assessments of their lie telling ability was low (Mean = 41.3, 95% CI= 31.2-51.3), yet it is not significantly lower than the middle point. The lie-telling ability that females assigned to themselves (Mean = 31.8, 95%

CI= 22.5-41.0) is underestimated (the higher bound is below the middle point "as good as others"). The three other abilities were overestimated by both males and females, and no gender differences were observed.

Another recent study (Elaad and Reizer, 2015) provided the opportunity to reexamine gender differences in lie related ability assessments on students. Elaad and Reizer computed the lie-telling assessments of 84 male students (mean 50.5, 95% CI= 44.4-56.6) and that of 88 female students (mean 40.9, 95% CI = 35.6-46.2). Results indicated that females underestimated their lie telling ability, whereas males did not. Males and females overestimated their lie-detection, truth-telling and believing abilities. No gender differences were found for these three abilities.

Unlike the reported studies the present sample of participants is not limited to students and consists of a larger age range. In addition, the present study is designed to provide a first glance on how the interaction between religiosity and gender affects ratings of the various abilities.

2.5. The Hypothesized Joint Effects of Personality and Religiosity on Self-Assessed Lie-Truth Related Abilities

To examine the joint effects of personality traits and religiosity on self-assessed lie-truth-related abilities we will test the following:

Regarding the combined effect of Agreeableness and religiosity on the four self-assessed communication abilities, it is predicted that agreeable people who are cooperative, trusting, and helpful, will rank themselves highest on believing others and lowest on lie-telling. This is especially true for females. Further, religious rules cherish the same abilities (being trustful and avoid lying). Therefore, Agreeableness will predict high self-assessed trust and low self-assessed lying ability, among secular participants but not among religious participants who follow religious rules more than personality drives.

Conscientious individuals are likely to be self-disciplined, organized, responsible, dependable, and have strong work ethic. It is predicted that Conscientiousness will be positively related to the ability to convince others when telling the truth and negatively related to the ability to lie. Again, religion interferes with these qualities because it endorses telling the truth and eschews lie-telling. Therefore, we expect finding for secular but not religious participants to support the hypothesized associations.

Openness to experience is related to strong intellectual curiosity. Open people are independent and creative, and prefer a variety of activities over a strict routine (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Such people are expected to be cognitively flexible. However, these personality dimensions are blocked by religiousness. It is predicted that if there are Openness to experience effects on the four self-assessed lie-truth abilities they will be found only among secular participants.

As to Extraversion, it seems that extroverts' tendency to assess their lie-telling and lie-detecting abilities higher than introverts will appear among secular but not among religious participants. With respect to telling the truth and believing others, which are traits that are endorsed by religion, similar ratings are expected from religious and secular extroverts.

Finally, it was predicted that neurotic participants will show low ratings of all four abilities. Therefore, we do not expect neurotic religious participants to differ from neurotic secular participants in their self-assessed lie-related skills.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants

Eighty individuals from a Jewish Israeli religious community (41 females) and 80 secular Israeli individuals (40 females) were recruited for the study. The age means of the four groups were computed as follows (standard deviations in brackets): religious males 29.8 (6.69) years; religious females 28.7 (6.9) years; secular males 30.6 (8.3) years; and secular females 31.9 (8.3) years. It is evident that the age means of the four groups are very similar.

3.2. Materials

Self-Assessed abilities to tell and detect lies, tell truths, and believe others

Participants completed a questionnaire consisting of four items on which they assessed their lie-telling, truth-telling, lie-detection, and believing abilities, relative to other people. Answers ranged from 0 (*much worse than others*) to 100 *(much better than others*) with an intermediate anchor 50 (*as good as others*). Participants were asked, for example, "In comparison with other people how would you assess your own ability to tell lies?" Such questions have been used in previous studies (e.g. Elaad, 2009; Elaad et al. 2012). Note that each question measures a different feature and therefore they do not construct a scale. Still, Cronbach alpha was computed (.43) indicating some self-assessment consistency of the different abilities.

3.3. The Big Five Personality Inventory

The Hebrew version of the Big Five inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), which was translated by Almagor, Tellegan and Waller (1995), was used to assess the Big Five personality traits. The inventory is a 44-item, self-report

measure, that comprises five subscales: Neuroticism (e.g., being tensed, moody, and anxious), Extraversion (e.g., talkative, energetic, and assertive), Openness (e.g., having wide interests and being imaginative and insightful), Agreeableness (e.g., being sympathetic, kind, and affectionate), and Conscientiousness (e.g., being organized, thorough, and reliable). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which various statements describe them on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). The reliability and validity of the BFI questionnaire have been demonstrated in several studies in different cultures and ethnic groups, including in Israel (e.g., Schmitt, et al., 2008). In the current study, Cronbach alphas were computed for each scale:.73 for Openness to experience;.64 for Agreeableness;.75 for Neuroticism;.67 for Extraversion; and .72 for Conscientiousness.

3.4. Procedure

The participants were greeted by two young female experimenters, signed an informed consent form, and were told that the goal of the study was to learn more about their attitudes toward lying and truth telling and therefore, there were no correct or incorrect answers. Participants were guaranteed that the data would be used exclusively for the purpose of the study and were assured of their anonymity. No time constraint was imposed on participants to complete the questionnaires. Participants completed the questionnaires individually and were thanked and debriefed.

4. Results

4.1. Personality Contribution to the Self-Assessed Abilities to Tell and Detect Lies, Tell Truths, and Believe Others

To examine the contribution of personality dimensions to the ability assessments, four multivariate multiple regression analyzes were performed, one for each assessed ability. The Big Five dimensions entered as the independent variables. A significant hierarchical regression model for predicting lie-telling assessments, $F_{(5, 154)}$ =5.49, p<.001, was obtained, which accounted for 15.1% of the variance. Lower levels of Agreeableness (β = -.38, t= -4.71, p <.001), and lower levels of Neuroticism (β = -.17, t = -2.07, p =.04), contributed to the effect. A significant prediction of the lie-detection ability assessment, $F_{(5, 154)}$ =2.71, p =.022, which accounted for 8% of the variance, was driven by lower levels of Agreeableness, (β = -.29, t= -3.45, p =.001). Believing showed a similar significant prediction, $F_{(5, 154)}$ =5.93, p <.001, which accounted for 16% of the variance, and was driven by higher levels of Agreeableness, (β =.39, t= 4.91, p <.001). Finally, a non-significant hierarchical regression model for predicting truth-telling assessments was obtained, $F_{(5, 154)}$ =1.68, still, lower levels of Agreeableness, (β = -.18, t= -2.07, p =.04), predicted truth telling assessments.

4.2. Religiosity, Gender, and Self-Assessments of the Abilities to Tell and Detect Lies, Tell Truths, and Believe Others

The means of the four ability assessments along with other statistics, computed for religious and secular males and females are presented in Table 1.

Inspection of Table 1 suggests that the lie-telling ability is overestimated by both secular males and females (the lower bound of the 95% confidence interval is larger than the middle point 50 - "as good as others") and underestimated by religious participants, males and females alike (the higher bound of the 95% confidence interval is lower than 50). Further, secular males rated their lie-telling ability significantly higher than females (no overlap between the two confidence intervals). Males and females did not differ in their lie-detecting, truth-telling, and believing abilities. However, secular participants self-assessed their lie-detecting and truth-telling abilities higher than their religious counterparts. Religious participants rated their believing ability higher than the corresponding secular participants.

Table 1. Means (percent) and other statistics of self-assessed lie and truth related abilities computed according to religiosity and gender.

	Tell Lies	Detect Lies	Tell Truths	Believe Others	N
Secular Males					
Mean	77.3	76.0	80.3	57.1	40
SE	2.97	2.72	2.68	2.41	
95% CI	71.2-83.3	70.5-81.5	74.9-85.6	52.2-62.0	
Secular Females					
Mean	56.8	78.8	77.0	58.3	40
SE	2.78	2.30	1.86	2.12	
95% CI	51.1-62.4	74.1-83.4	72.7-81.3	54.5-62.0	
Religious Males					
Mean	36.7	55.9	70.0	73.1	39
SE	2.09	3.15	2.54	2.36	
95% CI	32.4-40.9	49.5-62.3	64.9-75.2	68.3-77.8	
Religious Females					

	Tell Lies	Detect Lies	Tell Truths	Believe Others	N
Mean	41.2	56.0	68.5	65.4	41
SE	3.14	2.91	2.61	3.08	
95% CI	34.9-47.6	50.1-61.8	60.1-70.7	62.3-74.8	
Secular Combined					
Mean	67.0	77.4	78.6	57.7	80
SE	2.33	1.78	1.70	1.56	
95% CI	62.3-71.6	73.8-80.9	75.2-82.0	54.7-60.7	
Religious Combined					
Mean	39.0	55.9	67.6	70.7	80
SE	1.91	2.13	1.83	1.96	
95% CI	35.2-42.8	51.7-60.2	64.0-71.3	66.8-74.6	

Another way to present religiosity and gender effects on lie-truth ability assessments is by comparing means. Religiosity and gender effects were examined using a 2 × 2 × 4 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with Religiosity (secular and religious) and Gender (males and females) as the between-subject variables, and Abilities (the four self-assessed abilities) as the dependent variable. The MANOVA showed a significant overall religiosity effect (λ =.550, $F_{(4,153)}$ = 31.3, p<.001, η^2_p=.45). Considering the individual ability assessments, a significant lie-telling ability effect was obtained ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 101.2, p <.001, η^2_p =.39), as well as significant lie-detecting ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 59.2, p <.001, η^2_p =.28), and truth telling ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 19.2, p <.001, η^2_p =.11) effects. Results imply that secular participants exhibited significantly higher assessments of their lie-telling, lie detecting, and truth telling abilities than their religious counterparts. In contrast, the significant Believing ability ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 28.0, p <.001, η^2_p =.15) indicates that religious participants rated their ability to believe others higher than secular participants.

A significant overall Gender effect (λ =.923, $F_{(4,153)}$ = 3.2, p=.015, η^2_p =.08) rest on gender differences ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 20.2, p <.001, η^2_p =.11) in the lie-telling ability ratings. No other significant gender differences were observed.

Finally, a significant overall interaction effect (λ =.843, $F_{(4,153)}$ = 7.1, p<.001, η^2_p =.16) emerged. The effect implies that Religiosity and Gender interact when the lie-telling ability is considered ($F_{(1,156)}$ = 20.2, p <.001, η^2_p =.11). Specifically, the lie-telling ability ratings of secular males is significantly higher than the lie-telling ratings of secular females ($t_{(78)}$ = 5.0, p <.001, d =1.13). No significant difference in the lie-telling ratings among religious participants was observed. No significant interaction effects were apparent for lie-detecting, truth-telling, and believing abilities.

4.3. The Joint Effects of Personality and Religiosity on Self-Assessed Lie-Truth-Related Abilities

Next, the extent to which the Big Five personality dimensions predicted each of the four self-assessed abilities was examined separately for religious and secular participants. For each religiosity group four multivariate multiple regression analyzes were performed, one for each assessed ability. An overall lie-telling effect was obtained for secular participants, $F_{(5,74)}$ = 3.7, p=.005, which was driven by lower levels of Agreeableness (β = -.33, t = *-2.85, p* =.007), lower levels of Conscientiousness (β = -.27, t = *-2.30, p* =.024), and lower levels of Neuroticism (β = -.26, t = *-2.28, p* =.025). No lie-telling effects were found for religious participants. An overall believing effect was computed for the secular group of participants, $F_{(5,74)}$ = 4.9, p=.001, which was driven by higher levels of Agreeableness (β =.52, t = *4.62, p* <.001). Similar effects were not found for the religious group. Lie-detecting and truth-telling ability assessments have not provided significant effects.

5. Discussion

This study examined for the first time the predictions of personality dimensions (the Big Five) on self-assessed communication abilities to tell and detect lies, tell truths, and believe others among religious and secular Israeli males and females. The present results established interesting relationships between the Big Five personality dimensions, religiosity, gender, and self-assessed lie-truth-related abilities. As predicted, secular but not religious participants who scored high on Agreeableness considered themselves as having a limited capacity to deliver lies persuasively and an enhanced ability to believe other people. This finding is in line with the characteristics of agreeable people. They are trusting, cooperative and helpful which explains the high believing scores and low lie-telling scores. The failure to replicate these results among religious participants can be explained by the blocking effect of religiosity. Religiosity cherishes trust and condemns deception, and therefore, acceptance of the religious values overshadows the effects of Agreeableness on these perceived abilities. Similarly, a significant contribution of Conscientiousness to the low self-assessed lie-telling ability emerged among secular but not among religious participants. Again, these results were in line with the predictions, as Conscientiousness individuals are likely to be self-disciplined, organized, determined, responsible, dependable, and have a strong work ethic. These

traits are negatively associated with a self-assessed ability to tell lies. It is therefore of no surprise that the present results supported this link. Similar effects were not found among religious participants due to religion interference with the effects of Conscientiousness on the lie-telling ability assessment. Religious standards endorse telling the truth and renounce lie-telling. By adopting religious values, people perceive themselves as poor lie-tellers irrespective of their Conscientiousness score.

Neuroticism predicted low ratings of lie-telling skills. Individuals who score high on Neuroticism have low self-confidence, are less able to deal with stress, and experience failure very often. In this context, they feel unable to lie convincingly. Again, the effect was not found among religious participants mainly because religious standards block Neuroticism effects on the self-assessed lie-telling ability.

Regarding the relationship between religiosity, gender, and self-assessed lying abilities, it appeared that religious individuals self-assessed their lying abilities lower than secular participants. The question is whether the compliance to religious standards is genuine and reflects the respondents' genuine self-assessed lying abilities, or whether these responses are designed to align with respondents' public image rather than reflect actual self-perception. Although Williams and Gilovich (2008) showed that people truly believe in their self-assessed ratings and take their estimates seriously enough to guide their actions, the undermining effects of social desirability and self-presentation remain to be studied in future research. Secular males provided significantly higher lie-detection ability ratings than secular females. The difference is explained by the success of the more ambitious males in competitive environments (Gneezy, et al, 2003). The ability to lie successfully is necessary to succeed in a competitive environment. Therefore, males are happy to see the lie-telling ability among their traits. Nevertheless, secular females also overestimated their lie-telling ability. It was suggested that the more trusting females believe more than males in other people's honesty and in their positive intentions and therefore are inclined to assign higher believing skills to themselves. Results did not support the predictions. The lie-telling gender effect was not repeated among religious participants. It may be that religiosity overshadow gender differences.

As for truth-related abilities, it seems that the ability to deliver the truth convincingly is assessed higher by secular than by religious people, whereas the ability to believe others is assessed higher by religious than by secular people. The ability to establish trust among people is an important religious value, and religious people comply with this rule.

The power of religious standards lies in their role in teaching us how to behave in a way that helps us not only to live in peace with others, but also to focus our attention on long-term rather than short-term goals (Ariely, 2012). Religious people are committed to a set of rules and restrictions that guide them in the decisions they take. The more choices we have, the more our self-control weakens. Religious laws make it easy to reach decisions about what to wear, what to eat, whether to work, watch TV, hang out with the kids, and many other daily decisions. Obeying the rules is an effective weapon in the battle of morality because rules prevent excessive deliberation and mental exhaustion. However, these rules also combat cognitive flexibility and in some social decisions such as whether to tell the truth or to lie, the remaining cognitive flexibility vanishes.

Finally, the blocking of cognitive flexibility by religious standards correspond to significantly lower assessments of lie-telling, lie-detection, and truth-telling abilities by religious participants compared to secular participants. In contrast, the assessments of the ability to believe others is significantly higher among religious individuals than among secular people. It seems that religion does not block the heightened assessment of the ability to believe others.

The present results may have implications to many social situations in which secular and religious males and females are required to believe other people, to convince them that they are telling the truth, and to find out whether people are lying to prevent them from gaining an unjustified advantage, and to lie from time to time to maintain the plausibility of their messages. All these behaviors may be associated with how these abilities are self-assessed. Religious participants self-assessed their lie-telling, lie-detecting, and truth-telling abilities significantly lower than secular participants. Unless the religious marker weakens in the workplace, this may affect the situation where missed deadlines, excuses for absenteeism and performance evaluations are based on the worker's ability to deliver the message convincingly. Confidence in the delivery abilities is important because managers are quite poor in truth and lie-detection (Hart, Hudson, Fillmore, & Griffith, 2006). Such confidence is especially important during job interviews. Organizations are interested in having employees with desirable traits (e.g., to be intelligent, experienced, motivated, sociable, and honest (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001). A successful employment interview is the outcome of the impression that candidates form that they own these very traits (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). Therefore, truthful impression formation strategies and the ability to convince others in employment interviews may increase candidates' prospects to become employed (Reinhard, Scharmach, & Müller, 2013).

A previous attempt to associate the Big-Five and self-assessed lie-truth related abilities (Elaad & Reizer, 2015)

allow a comparison between the earlier results and the present ones. Elaad and Reizer reported that high Agreeableness scores predicted high ratings of believing others and low ratings of lie-telling, truth-telling, and lie detection. Across religious groups, the present study reported similar Agreeableness associations with all four self-assessed abilities. The precise replication enhances the power of the Agreeableness results. Neuroticism was found by Elaad and Reizer, to be associated with low lie-telling ability assessments. The current study replicated this result too. Finally, Elaad and Reizer, showed that Conscientiousness contributed to lower lie-telling ability assessment. A similar result was found in the present study but only among the secular group of participants. Nevertheless, the present study failed to replicate some other associations that were found by Elaad and Reizer (2015). Specifically, the associations between Extraversion and lie-telling, lie-detection, and truth telling abilities, as well as the link between Openness to experience and both lie-telling, and lie-detection.

6. Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present findings should be considered with caution because the associations between personality and the lie/truth assessments are based on cross-sectional design, so the direction of influence cannot be inferred with certainty. Future research may help in resolving this question.

Further, religiosity and gender are only two of many possible factors that mediate the link between personality traits and the perception of the lie-truth-related abilities. Future studies may examine whether stress situations, coping strategies, differences in stress appraisal, different values, or professional expertise in lie-telling and lie-detection, affect how personality traits predict the self-assessments of these abilities.

Finally, this is a self-report correlational study that intended to reveal consistent biases in peoples' self-image and explain the biases with personality attributes, religious influence, and gender differences. The next question is whether people follow their biased self-image and allow it to guide their behavior? another question is: in what circumstances such influence is more common and in what it is less common? Future research may provide proper answers.

7. Conclusions

The present study enriches our understanding of how confidence in lie-truth related abilities are linked with personality traits, how religiosity blocks these effects, and how gender affects these differences. Still, the related research is in its creation. Future studies should continue this line of research and provide more insight into the dynamic of the self-assessed lie/truth related abilities.

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