

# CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION BETWEEN RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT ON THE REQUIREMENT FOR RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

Mensur Nuredin, Yusuf Kılıç, page 21-33

## ABSTRACT

Emergence of several technologies and its relevant features have provided several organizations, state legislatures and normal human beings significant benefits in terms of enhancing their productivity and increasing their outcomes. Artificial Intelligence is one such technology that have sustained with beneficial parameters specifically for commercial firms Mikalef et al., (1). Artificial Intelligence incorporate features such as enhanced automation, smart intelligence services, accurate decision making and more. Nevertheless, the implementation of AI based features have significantly reduced the intervention of humans, Nahavandi (2), and the benefits it provides within health, environment, and economic sectors have raised several concerns. Potential misuse, unethical complexities, and biasness are some of the major hindrances which the technology faces. The states and national councils are accountable for mitigating such concerns and implement pertinent policies and regulations to extract out the positive aspects of Artificial Intelligence.

Subsequent sections of this paper demonstrate and evaluates relevant information regarding Artificial Intelligence. Furthermore, other parts of this brief paper highlight the legal regulations associated with Artificial Intelligence. particular emphasis is placed on the regulatory parameters incorporated in Balkan States (Slovenia, Serbia, and North Macedonia) for Artificial Intelligence and Robots. Moreover, the regulations in American and European Law over these technologies are also discussed in this paper. Another important aspect which this paper covers is related to the determination of the capability which the robots possesses and discussion on how they can be accepted as legal subjects. Lastly, the paper ends with a conclusion and evaluation section based upon all the fundamentals briefed overall.

**Keywords:** Legal Liability, Artificial Intelligence, Balkan States.



**Prof. Dr. Mensur Nuredin**

*International Vision  
University, Gostivar,  
N.Macedonia*

**e-mail:**

[mensur@vizyon.edu.mk](mailto:mensur@vizyon.edu.mk)

**M-r Yusuf Kılıç**

**e-mail:** [yusuf.kilic@vizyon.edu.mk](mailto:yusuf.kilic@vizyon.edu.mk)

**UDK:** 2-673.5:159

**Date of received:**

21.01.2022

**Date of acceptance:**

07.02.2022

**Declaration of interest:**

The authors reported no conflict of interest related to this article.

### **Introduction**

When the historical process was examined in terms of psychology, the science of psychology tried to act independently by excluding religion at the point of proving itself. Although the relationship between psychology and religion was not at all desirable in the first years of psychology, meaningless discussions and insistence on looking at each other from different points of view softened in the future, and a significant distance was covered although it did not reach the desired level in our time. However, the fact that these discussions were meaningless in a short time, paved the way for them to come together and unite on the common denominators between religion and psychology. In fact, the common point between them is also the reason for the existence of religion and psychology. Both purpose is the human, so it is to get to know the person, to diagnose his troubles and to look for ways out, to enter the spiritual world of the person and to offer alternative remedies by helping him. Although their approaches and philosophies are different, while religion and psychology focus on the same subjects, namely human behaviors, emotions-thoughts, problems, spiritual characteristics and obsessions, on the other hand, it is to help them reach happiness and peace by putting forward adopting, analytical and relaxing ideas in order to find solutions to these problems. Since man is a multidimensional and complex creature, the subject of psychology has expanded rapidly since its establishment. On the other hand, since man has a dynamic structure that changes according to the conditions of the time he lives in, the field of study of psychology has changed over time. The expansion and change of the subject of psychology has led to the emergence of sub-branches of psychology. One of them is the psychology of religion. Naturally, the developments and changes in the psychological field have started to change and develop in the psychology of religion, and the psychology of religion has gone to determine its own field and scope. (Düzgüner, 2017, p. 135) .

### **The Relationship between Religion and Psychology and Definition Problem**

Since psychology has began to emerge as a discipline, itself has developed as a result of the studies and researches it has done, and it has been divided into new different approaches and different sub-branches in a long time.

The emergence of these branches bears the traces of the spirit of the time. As a matter of fact, as studies focusing on a certain aspect of human beings get deeper, enough findings and conclusions emerge to be a separate research area. Naming the field is often the last step in a new classification to systematically treat these studies. Cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and psychology of religion are some of them. Each sub-branch points to a special research area (Düzgüner, 2017, p. 135). For example, while developmental psychology focuses on the psychological characteristics of people at different ages, social psychology focuses on the individual's feelings, thoughts and behaviors being affected by the presence of other people. The psychology of religion also examines the effects of whether an individual chooses to adhere to a religious belief or not (Köse A. -A., 2015)

Psychology is a science that aims to understand and explain the spiritual life, personality and characters of human beings and various behavioral tendencies. The subjects that psychology deals with, have been the subject of human curiosity and occupied their minds in various civilizations and societies since the ancient times, albeit with different perspectives. Various psychology theories and explanations, which are also fed with religious belief tradition and philosophical understandings, have never been missing in the knowledge of humanity (Hökelekli, 2016, p. 333).

The belief and sense of belief that existed with the first human being, has led the human to search and understand the reason for his existence. Due to their nature, individuals have pursued the sacred and have given direction to their lives in line with this sacred that they value. Their emotions, behaviors and thought structures are shaped by the influence of their religion or belief (Düzgüner, 2017). Psychologists, who are aware of the influence of religious belief in individual and social life, have also considered religion as the subject of psychological research from the first period. When the historical course of psychology is examined, it is known that all researchers such as Wundt, James, Skinner, Freud, Watson, Jung, Maslow, who are known as the founders of psychology, are interested in religion and have researches on this subject.

It was unthinkable that psychology, which deals with the spiritual life and behavior of people, ignores religion, belief and religious facts, which permeate every aspect of social life and are an integral part of culture. Therefore, whether they have a positive or negative belief and

attitude towards religion, researchers with psychology formation have considered it their duty to reveal the religious developments and belief structuring of the individual's life, and the meaning of the powerful influence of religious experiences and beliefs, prayer, rituals and worship on human behavior (Hökelekli, 2016, pp. 313-333). Religious belief will not allow us to reach the result we want to deal with, by ignoring the fact that it affects and directs the spiritual depths of a person and all his behaviors in his life.

When we look at the process between the religion and the psychology, although they seem to be together under the roof of philosophy, we see their existence in problems besides people and theories. Throughout history, the relations between the two are not always complementary, but also contain tensions and oppositions. Because of these tensions and conflicts, Loewenthal describes the religion-psychology relationship as "an unhappy and difficult relationship". The religion of psychology that these problems and tension, point in the background of his exclusion from his field and religion's perception of psychology as a threat. To understand the nature of the relationship between religion and psychology, it is necessary to underline the differences between the two (Sambur, 2000, s. 421-435). We see that there are different ideas about the definition of religion or the meaning of religion. We observe the definition of religion is defined with a psychological approach rather than a definition according to religion. It has been seen that this type of definition approach will be a definition far from the reality and because it is a definition far from the the real nature of religion causes blockages and deadlocks in a scientific study point, as well as discussions on meaning and the concept. According to the G. Stephens Spinks approach, religion includes not only beliefs, customs, traditions and rituals belonging to certain social groups, but also individual experiences. Any definition that emphasizes the general aspects of religion by excluding the individual's psychic life is incomplete due to the individual understanding of some transcendent objects, powers or principles that constitute one of the most important features of religion (Spinks, 2008, pp. 309-318).

Professor C. C. J. Webb, one of the famous researchers in defining the religion, made an interesting definition about the religion. "I don't believe that the religion can be defined." His statement shows us that the researchers have problems and differences in describing the religion. In

addition to such a definition of Webb, many writers and researchers did not hesitate to express their views on religion. Sir James Frazer's definition of religion draws attention to a different side." "I understand religion as an appeasement of superhuman powers believed to control and direct human life and the flow of nature." However, Frazer adds, "Of course, faith comes first, because we have to believe that there is a divine being before we try to please it. Because before belief turns into an appropriate practice, it does not become a religion, only theology (Spinks, 2008). Here, Frazer draws attention to the existence of belief rather than the existence of religion, which in fact seems to be an important determination in terms of the spiritual and psychological structure of a human. The reason why Frazer prioritizes belief is that belief plays an active role in the soul of the individual, thus shaping the behavior, thoughts and feelings of the individual and transforming them into practical life.

R. Yaparel describes that the psychology of religion actually works at the same central point, but there are conceptual and structural differences between them in the future; The central concept on which religion and psychology are based is the psyche. The religion states that it originates from the depths of the human soul and that religious belief takes root there. For religion, every phase of human development revolves around a spiritual dimension. In modern psychology, on the other hand, the concept of soul does not have a place in the periphery, as it is not central. Psychology no longer gives the meaning of "spirit" to "psycho", but examines it as behavior and measurable characteristics (Yaparel, 1998).

Approaching the definition of religion from a different perspective, Prof. George Galloway makes the following definition; Religion indicates that people believe in a power other than themselves. Thanks to this belief, the person wants his emotional needs to be satisfied and his life to gain stability. He/she expresses his/her belief through acts of service and worship (Spinks, 2008). The main issue to be emphasized here is on human and his psychological demands and needs. In addition, Galloway, while describing religion, draws attention to the point of deed and service.

It seems that these definitions about the religion do not satisfy those who make these definitions. Therefore, at this point, attempts have been made to provide a satisfactory comprehensive definition. One of

them is Leuba. Leuba added two of her own definitions along with 48 definitions in her work titled "Psychological Study of Religion (Psychological Study of Religion, 1912) and drew a conclusion based on these definitions; what is defined does not imply the same activity in all cases. Like the concept of "God", the concept of "religion" is one of the words "umbrella", which combines the meanings and protective meanings that confirm or openly oppose the other (Spinks, 2008, p. 312).

The fact that there are many definitions about religion and these definitions are very different from each other, shows us that the concept of "religion" cannot be supported by any attitude. As it can be understood, a certain basis or attitude is not sufficient for religion. Therefore, besides these definitions of religion, it is necessary to deal with other religious factors that are within the field of religion and are a part of the individual's life.

### **The concept (term) of the psychology of religion and the problem of psychology of which religion**

Throughout history, the researchers and thinkers (philosophers) have published numerous works on religion. The psychology of religion includes the psychological treatment of religious belief. James' "Varieties of Religious Experience", published in 1992, is accepted as the beginning of this field because it presents the relationship between religion and psychology in a scientific framework. In terms of psychology, what sets James apart from other philosophers is his focus on individual religious experience rather than organized religious institutions. According to James, religion; is the whole of the feelings, actions and experiences that individuals experience alone in terms of seeing themselves in relationship with anything they think is divine (Düzgüner, 2017).

This description made by James forms the basis of the current principles of the psychology of religion. Issues such as the nature of the sacred, the rightness or wrongness of religious beliefs and practices are outside the scope of the psychology of religion. The psychology of religion only examines the reflections of belief or unbelief in the life of the individual with psychological research methods (Hökelekli, 2016)

When we look at the expressions or definitions made by researchers on the term and concept of psychology of religion, it does not seem possible to talk about the existence of a unity. Therefore, there are disagreements about whether the name psychology of religion is a correct concept for this new discipline. The term psychology of religion does not

adequately express the purpose of psychologists and the field of research related to the phenomenon of religiosity that they are trying to discipline. Many psychologists try to determine the subject of the psychology of religion by categorizing the concept of "religion". For example, Maslow distinguishes subjective and naturalistic religious experience and attitude from traditional and institutional religion and presents institutional religion as the enemy of subjective religious experience. (Sambur, 2000)

With the term psychology of religion, it is meant to be a field in which religion is studied only from psychological point of view, which is not related to philosophy and theology. Vergote, who objected to the concept of psychology of religion, found the concept of religious psychology more appropriate instead. In this regard, Vergote emphasizes that this new field of study should not be isolated from moral and religious values for the sake of being scientific. Again, although Vergote theoretically claims that the psychology of religion does not deal with the principles of any religion as right or wrong, Vergote says that his "religious psychology" should be based on the evaluation of the psychological findings of "Christian truths" (Sambur, 2000).

The first religious psychologists in Europe and the USA conducted their studies in an environment dominated by Christian-Jewish religious cultures. The limitations of psychology in basic human understanding, its inability to evaluate the characteristics of the individual, and the results that cannot be generalized, limited to middle-class white students, also pose a problem in the psychology of religion. Therefore, the religion they faced and the religious phenomena they chose as the subject of research were entirely limited to their own cultural traditions. The most common mistake is to assume that the concepts and explanation models they use to make sense of their own religious and cultural worlds can be valid within a different belief tradition. There is a clear reductionism (Hökelekli, 2016).

One of the issues that Western researchers have been doing and being deceived for years is that they think that the religion they believe in, the culture they live in and the methods of expressing the concepts of this thought can be valid for people from other beliefs and cultures. Therefore, such an assumption is a big mistake as it is not an academic and scientific approach, as it would mean ignoring or ignoring the values, beliefs and cultures of other individuals and individuals.

When cultural history is examined, it tells us about Hindu, Greek, Christian, Islam and religions and beliefs that were considered primitive and found their place in history. In that case, the phenomenon called religion is a specific form that exists in the world of culture and a reality that historians accept and examine. If the rites, rituals, worship, symbols and figures, which are the structural features of religions, refer to a superhuman and supernatural spiritual, divine and transcendent entity, which is believed to have a beginning, and which has an effect on people's lives, society and all natural events, considered religious. Therefore, all these religious ideas are expressed through the language, symbols, rites and ceremonies. Realizing such elements, can also activate religious feelings and experiences. Since people are naturally prone to religion and belief, they are subject to a religion or belief that they see as close to them (Köse V. A., 1997).

For this reason, a psychologist or researcher should conduct studies within the framework of the elements included in the above-mentioned religious culture. In other words, doing these researches on only one religion or doing research with people belonging to these religions does not mean that that religion has superior characteristics, and generalizing with it will not lead to a correct result.

A psychologist must continue his work as a cultural anthropologist. His task is to explore the relationships people have with their surrounding religions as they exist. While doing these researches, people need to have knowledge about their religion and belief values. The belief in God in Islam, Christianity and Judaism will affect the religious attitudes and behaviors of people who believe in them. Therefore, such beliefs cannot be ignored in psychological studies of these religions. People are attached to their religion to different degrees or they form a different understanding according to the elements of their own religion. When the positive or negative psychological factors behind these religious perceptions and their effects are observed, these facts become psychologically meaningful (Köse V. A., 1997).

### **Argument**

It cannot be said that the concept of psychology of religion adequately expresses the aim of psychologists and the field of research related to the phenomenon of religiosity that they are trying to discipline. Therefore, this term has been criticized by religious researchers. The term psychology of religion refers to a field in which religion is studied only



from a psychological point of view, which is not related to philosophy and theology (Sambur, 2000).

Vergote, who opposes the term psychology of religion, sees the term "religious psychology" more appropriate. When we look at the books or articles written about the psychology of religion, it is seen that the majority of researchers or psychologists are from a religious group and have received a theological education and also served in churches. Therefore, this is the reason why most of the studies on the psychology of religion are done in theology departments. It will never be possible to know how objective and reliable the psychology of religion studies carried out by these people, who have a Christian identity (Sambur, 2000).

There have been arguments on the term psychology of religion itself. All religions that exist here give the impression that they are the same in terms of their elements or that there is a consensus between them in method and theory. In fact, there are many different principles, theories, and approaches in the psychology of religion. In this sense, if we talk about a theory, principle and approach of each religion, we can talk about principles, theories and approaches as well as existing religions. Reich drawing attention to the fact that the psychology of religion was diversified and divided into sub-branches, tries to explain it as follows by expressing that it is no longer possible to talk about the psychology of religion; because there are as many religion psychology as there are religions (Sambur, 2000)

A. Vergote, Considering that Contemporary Religious Studies refers to religion as a "cultural reality" in religious studies, it is a well-known fact that various religious phenomena observed in different cultures exist with their own unique structure and meaning maps. However, it is very difficult to say that both western researchers and scientists from different religions and geographies do justice to this fact. Most of the time, the facts and interpretations presented as a universal science as the science of psychology of religion consist entirely of a reflection of the Christian-Jewish reality. Studies in which all differences are eliminated and religion is reduced to a uniform reality with this central point of view represent the dominant understanding until recently (Hökelekli, 2016).

When the term psychology of religion is considered from a wide spectrum, it is seen that this field is not sufficient to cover other branches of study. The term psychology of religion is expressed as a branch of

science that psychologically examines people's beliefs, religious attitudes and behaviors. However, the scope of the psychology of religion is not limited to these researches. In particular, the spiritual guidance studies of the priest working in the church are included in the field of psychology of religion, in "pastoral psychology". Apart from the scientific activities, there is an intellectual activity that produces ideas about the human nature in disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and theology. The fact that it does not cover these areas is an important deficiency of the psychology of religion concept (Sambur, 2000).

It is seen that the psychology of religion, which works on religious behavior and life, is gathered in the center of Christianity in the first degree within the diversity and richness of the American and European literature. Although this effort of Europe, which is a Christian society, is welcomed naturally, the fact that it neglects other religions or does not deliberately bring them into the agenda shows us that there is a clear and clear bigotry. Today, however, Christianity has lost its privilege of being the only religion subject to the psychology of religion and has become one among religions.

The most obvious form of bigotry in America and Europe shows itself on the religion of Islam. Efforts to humiliate him, which are mostly difficult to explain with scientific understanding, have led to weak and mostly wrong judgments in the field of Islamic psychology. Z. Egemen pointed out another shortcoming and stated as follows; In order to examine the differences in the religious life of members of different religions, it is necessary to start studies on "Comparative Psychology of Religion" as a branch of psychology of religion in the future.

Egemen especially emphasizes the Concept of the Religion of Islam. Because, especially Islamic sects and sects offer rich research and observation opportunities for the psychology of religion, which tries to research all kinds of outwardly reflected expressions of religious life, examine them in the context of cause and effect, and reveal their rules and laws. In addition to extraordinary situations such as mystical states, religious rites and rituals, discovery and miracles in all their diversity, considering the practices such as dhikr, asceticism, suffering, i'tikaf, sema, which cause these to happen, within the framework of psychological causation, constitute the subject of examination and research of the psychology of religion, especially the psychology of Islamic religion. (Hökelekli, 2016).

Every religion has its own belief and way of reducing this belief to life. Individuals organize their lives according to the religions they believe in and the directives (orders and prohibitions) of these religions. This religious life leads the individual to peace and tranquility in his spiritual life. Because the wishes and desires of those who believe in a God, their feelings and thoughts are shaped in parallel with the image of the God they believe in and know. At this point, it can be said that the individual will follow the way of acting in the face of religion or events against religion and realizing the decisions he will make in line with his belief. Therefore, the life of a believer should be evaluated in line with his own religion and belief. If you come to the stage of research, examination and decision-making in line with your own religion and belief without questioning the belief and religion of every segment of the society, without knowing about it, there will be an unscientific approach in the diagnosis of the psychological state of the individual, since the religious sensitivities of the individuals are not taken into account. This approach, which has been applied for many years, has been counted as one of the biggest obstacles to the development of the psychology of religion.

## **CONCLUSION**

Psychology is a branch of science that deals with the spiritual life and behavior of people. Having made itself independent from philosophy, the psychology has covered a great distance to become a scientific field. Psychology, which is on its way to becoming a natural science, modeled itself on sciences such as biology and physics. Therefore, psychology, which took physics and biology as a model, tried to keep the main subjects such as religion and spirit outside of itself. Psychology's failure to view religion as a legitimate subject of psychological research has alienated the psychology from the religion.

When we look at the process between the religion and the psychology, although they seem to be together under the roof of philosophy, we see their existence in problems besides people and theories. Throughout history, the relations between the two are not always complementary, but also contain tensions and oppositions. Despite these differences and tensions, the relationship between the psychology and the religion has never reached the breaking point.

At the same time, there is an inconsistency problem at the point of definition of researchers on the concept of psychology of religion.

Therefore, there are disagreements about whether the name psychology of religion is a correct concept for this new discipline.

In addition, another point that draws attention is; The psychology of religion studies were carried out in an environment dominated by Western religious culture. Western researchers have tried to consider the concepts and explanation models they apply to make sense of their own religious structures, belief values and cultural worlds as valid for the traditions of different beliefs. Therefore, the religion they faced and the religious phenomena they chose as the subject of research were entirely limited to their own cultural traditions. In other words, it is a vicious circle to make generalizations about the behavior of people coming from another religious and cultural tradition with the data obtained as a result of the researches made on the Christian religious view and its point of view, and it is an approach that is far from a scientific study.

There is a serious relationship between the religion, the psychology and the theology, so more constructive and intensive work should be done to establish a unity between them. Instead of separating religion from psychology, psychologists and theologians should benefit from each other more and strengthen their relations. Psychology and religion alone do not seem to be possible for a healthy research to come to a conclusion. Therefore, a researcher should open his door to all subjects from both psychology and theology and religious culture and should not be limited to a single discipline. In our age, psychology has made a lot of progress. And in the near future, as Egemen stated, Comparative Psychology of Religion Studies as a branch of psychology of religion will be started in the future in order to examine the differences in the religious life of members of different religions, thereby paving the way for positive developments in the field of religious psychology.

#### DECLARATION

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest

## REFERENCES

Düzgüner, S. (2017). Din Psikolojisi ve İslam Psikolojisi Bağlamında Yeniden Düşünmek/ Rethinking in the Context of the Psychology of Religion and the Psychology of Islam. *İslami ilimle Degisi*, 135.

Hökelekli, H. Z. (2016). Dindarlık Ve Din Psikolojisi Araştırmaları/ Religiosity and Psychology of Religion Studies,. *DEUIFD dİN psikolojisi Özel Sayısı*, 313-333.

Köse, A. -A. (2015). *Din Psikolojisi/ Psychology of Religion*. İstanbul.

Köse, V. A. (1997). Din Psikolojisi Nedir Ne değildir/ What is and what is not the Psychology of Religion. *İlam Arşatırma Dergisi c,u*, 160-167.

Sambur, B. (2000). Din Ve Psikoloji İlişisini Yeniden Düşünmek/ Rethinking the Relationship Between Religion and Psychology. *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi Cilt 9 Sayı 3*, 421-435.

Spinks, G. S. (2008). Psikoloji ve Din / Psychology and Religion *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 13:1 çev.Bozkurt Koç, Zeynep Özcan*, 309-318.

Yaparel, R. (1998). Din Piskolojosi-sosyoloji ilişkisi: sosyal psikolojide konu ve metod sorunu/ The relationship between religion, psychology and sociology: the problem of subject and method in social psychology. . *D.E.Ü İlahiyat Fak Dergisi no.xı* , 113.