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Quest (re) modeled: The Questionnaire of Religious Insight a new tool for analyzing religious insights, and its empirical verification

Abstract. The Questionnaire of Religious Insights (QRI) presented in this paper was constructed to challenge the current model of religious orientations, especially the Quest Scale, by providing insight into different kinds of motivation that can influence spiritual seeking. The QRI contains two scales: Doubt (D) and Quest (Q). Validation of the internal reliability of the QRI and external criteria analysis was examined within an exploratory study conducted in a group recruited under a research grant. The second was conducted on a group of 117 young Polish adults. The study provided evidence for the internal reliability of QRI and its criterion validity using Religious Orientation Scales. The results of the second study suggest that most of the external validity criteria have been met. In conclusion, the proposed model of exploring motivation factors that may influence religious questing is a topic worth pursuing. We present studies that can follow this exploratory study that can be undertaken on more extensive and diverse age samples.

Keywords: QRI, tool, spiritual seeking, religious orientations, validation.

Allport (1960) considered the capacity to question and doubt one's convictions a sign of mature religiosity. However, while questioning the religious truths may be a required step towards a stronger faith and integrated beliefs characteristic of

mature religiosity, it can just as well come with doubts and insecurities typical for teenagers (Kojetin et al., 1987). It is, therefore, not surprising that Batson's research exemplifies the incomplete validity of the operationalization of the mature religious sentiment in terms of the "I-E" dualism (Batson et al., 1973; Smart, 2016). Subsequently, Pargament (1992) noted that each of Allport's (1960) and Batson's (1976) religious orientations might be means to, as well as a goal of religious activity, and therefore insights are only sometimes mature. Religious insights are a broader and more complex term than a quest religious orientation. The various inconsistencies suggest this notion in research into quest orientation. For example, Quest religious motivation correlates positively with altruism and prosocial motivations regardless of religious and cultural background (Preston et al., 2010; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2016). However, there are some exceptions. For example, Quest religious orientation correlates with a decreased likelihood of helping individuals perceived as intolerant (Jaume et al., 2013; Batson et al., 2001). Such exceptions require alternate explanations different than religious maturity identified with classically understood quest orientation.

How to solve the problem of inconsistent research results into Quest religious orientation?

Some scholars have argued for the heterogeneous nature of the Quest religious orientation and suggested various sub-scales (Beck & Jessup, 2004). We argue with Neyrinck et al. (2010, p. 425) that this heterogeneity may be related to various religious insights.

Initially, Socha emphasized that maturity or lack thereof is present in every religious orientation (Socha, 1995, p. 140). This argumentation was raised by Małgorzata Stępień-Nycz in her work entitled *A place of quest orientation in the formation of religious identity* and used to design the very first version of the questionnaire (Stępień-Nycz, 2006; quoted with the permission of the author). This reflection resulted in the design of two scales of religious Quest: (1) The scale of immature religious Quest and (2) The scale of the existential religious Quest, which was evaluative and referred only to the attitude towards the Catholic Church, which does not correspond to today's landscape of religiosity in Poland. Then following Pargament's arguments, Socha distinguished religious Doubt from religious Quest, which gave rise to the current investigations and research conducted on their basis. Despite the authors of the quest concept insisting on a solid connection between this religious orientation and mental health (Batson et al., 1993, p. 166; Ventis, 1995), the review of Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (2014) shows that there is no clear relationship between the Quest religious orientation measured by the Religious Orientation Scales and mental health (cf. p. 190). The lack of a significant correlation between Quest Religious Orientation and depression was also shown in Jaeger's research from 2006 (Jaeger, n.d.), which tested the hypothesis of a negative correlation between Quest religious orientation and depression measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1961). This negative correlation aligns with the idea that Quest religious orientation results in tolerance, openness to change, situational sensitivity, and

self-reliance (Hood et al., 1996, p. 36). However, Ventis noted that “the intellectual honesty and openness to religious questioning implied in this dimension may yield a sense of self-esteem and self-control, but at a possible price of personal unification and organization, and continuing encounter with existential anxiety, worry, and/or guilt” (Ventis, 1995, p. 41). One of the studies showed a low but statistically significant positive correlation between Quest religious orientation and depression measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (Levick & Delaney, 1987, after Batson et al., 1993). Therefore, research results contradict the theoretical concepts of the authors of the quest religious orientation (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 2014; Jaeger, n.d.). The only religious orientation research shows correlates negatively with depression is Intrinsic religious orientation (Burriss et al., 1994; Genia & Shaw, 1991). One may explain this correlation with the human need to create relationships, which results in religion being used as a remedy for solitude, one of the challenges of human existence (Mijuskovic, 2018).

The design of a new tool

In the original version, the questionnaire was called the “Religious Reflection Questionnaire.” It consisted of 20 questions, which, among the many possible denominations and institutions, referred only to the institutions of the Catholic Church (Stępień-Nycz, 2006; quoted with the permission of the author). Twenty items were grouped into two dimensions: (1) The scale of the immature religious Quest [Im] and (2) The scale of the existential religious Quest [Eg] – see Table 1.

Table 1

Religious Reflection Questionnaire

1	I want to believe, but I have too many doubts. [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
2	I am looking for justification for every teaching of the Church, I do not want to take anything "on faith" [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
3	God and His works are so mysterious and impenetrable that any man can understand them; we can only find the right way [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
4	I had a religious crisis when I discovered inaccuracies in the teachings of the Church; now I doubt most of his teachings [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
5	The teaching of the Church presents an overly simplistic picture of reality (reality is much more complex than the Church presents) [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
6	I doubt it's possible to know the ultimate truth, but that does not stop me from continuing my search [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
7	I want my faith to flow from my own thoughts, not the teachings of the Church [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

8	I do not think that the Church and its representatives are right in every situation [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
9	Searching for an answer to the question about the meaning of life and death is the most important thing for me [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
10	When it comes to religion, it is important to keep looking for the truth, even if we have no hope of eventually finding it [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
11	The various teachings of the Church seem contradictory to me [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
12	Despite the guidance given by the Church, I cannot deal with my doubts [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
13	I don't think I'll ever be able to settle my religious doubts, but that's no reason to stop trying to wrestle with them [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
14	I do not want anyone to impose their solutions on me, so when I have doubts, I do not consult representatives of the Church (e.g., priests) [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
15	Searching for answers to existential questions should be the most important content of spiritual life [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
16	Church teaching does not answer all questions [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
17	In religious life, it is sometimes more important to ask a question than to answer it [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
18	I believe that a long search is needed before I can find answers to many questions about religion [Eg]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
19	I often question the teachings of the Church [Im]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
20	The search for answers to the ultimate questions gives meaning to my life [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Source: Stępień-Nycz, 2006; quoted with the permission of the author.

Items were chosen by competent judges' method from the preliminary design of 31 sentences (ibidem). However, one can quickly notice that all the items concerning criticizing the Catholic Church seen as an expression of immaturity – have been assigned to the scale of immature religious Quest. This claim is untenable in light of social changes in Poland, Poles' religiosity in the last 20 years (CBOS, 2020), and the progressive secularization of the Western world and its causes. In the new version, all direct references to the Catholic Church have been removed out of concern for the worldview neutrality of individual test items, and five new items have been added. The new version was verified as neutral regarding denomination and particular worldview by competent judges' method and was renamed "Questionnaire of Religious Insight" (see Table 2).

Table 2

Questionnaire of Religious Insight – items before analysis of reliability and factor analysis

1	I want to believe, but I have too many doubts.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
2	I'm looking for justification for every dogma, I don't want to take anything "on faith."	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
3	God and His works are so mysterious and impenetrable that any man can understand them; we can only find the right way.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
4	I had a religious crisis when I discovered inaccuracies in religious teachings; I doubt most of them now.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
5	The teaching of most religious institutions presents an overly simplistic picture of reality (reality is much more complex than it presents).	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
6	I doubt it's possible to know the ultimate truth, but that doesn't stop me from continuing my search.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
7	I want my faith to flow from my own thoughts, not from the teachings of any religious community.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
8	I don't think that representatives of any religious community are right in every situation.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
9	Searching for an answer to the question about the meaning of life and death is the most important thing for me.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
10	When it comes to religion, it is important to keep looking for the truth, even if we have no hope of eventually finding it.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
11	No belief-based teaching is entirely consistent.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
12	Despite the guidance of communities or religious institutions, I cannot deal with my doubts.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
13	I don't think I'll ever be able to settle my religious doubts, but that's no reason to stop trying to wrestle with them.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
14	I do not want anyone to impose their solutions on me, so when I have doubts, I do not consult representatives of any religious community.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
15	Searching for answers to existential questions should be the most important content of spiritual life.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
16	No belief system answers all questions.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
17	In religious life, it is sometimes more important to ask a question than to answer it.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
18	I believe that a long search is needed before I can find answers to many questions about religion.	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
19	I often question the teachings of religious communities [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
20	The search for answers to the ultimate questions gives meaning to my life [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
21	Developing, one must constantly look for new truths in religious faith [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

22	One cannot stay with one way of thinking about spiritual things all your life. [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
23	Over time, any belief system is no longer sufficient, and you have to search again and again. [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
24	Religious teaching does not match the needs of the ever-changing world and man [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
25	I cannot stay with one faith because I'm constantly changing. [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Source: Krzysztof-Świdorska et al., 2019.

Material and method

Sample

Initially, as a part of the grant awarded for the project implementation with the application number 2018/02/X/HS6/00245, "Religious search as a defense mechanism in the face of selected aspects of the human existential situation," a total number of 120 people were to be assessed. The sex proportion was to be 60/60. Then, online ads were placed, and 120 young adults were recruited for the testing. Each subject received 50 PLN (ca. 11 EUR) for participation. Some recruited subjects still needed to appear, even though they had confirmed their attendance. As a result, the study was held in two batches – in mid-April 2019 and mid-June 2019. In the second batch, additional participants were recruited, but the total number was still lower than planned. Finally, the sample consists of 117 subjects, which were tested with the use of a method that has been developed, and 90 subjects who also filled the criterion validity scale. The proportion of gender was approximately equal, and religious identification was relatively diverse. See Table 3 and Table 4. In terms of age, the group was homogeneous. See Table 5.

Both questionnaires were completed by 90 out of 117 respondents, and only 90 were considered in the criterion validity calculation. Gender proportion was close to equal, and the diversity of religious identifications was slightly lower. See Tables 6 and 7.

Table 3

Gender in the group of 117 subjects

	Frequency	Percent
Man	57	48,7
Woman	60	51,3
Total	117	100,0

Table 4
Religious identification

	Frequency	Percent
Catholicism	82	70,1
Protestantism – other	1	,9
Buddhism	1	,9
Atheism	7	6,0
None	16	13,7
Other	10	8,5
Total	117	100,0

Table 5
Age in the group of 117 subjects

	Frequency	Percent
19	11	9,4
20	25	21,4
21	28	23,9
22	19	16,2
23	23	19,7
24	4	3,4
25	6	5,1
26	1	,9
Total	117	100,0

Table 6
Gender in the group of 90 subjects

	Frequency	Percent
Man	40	44,4
Woman	50	55,6
Total	90	100,0

Table 7
Religious identification

	Frequency	Percent
Catholicism	80	88,9
Protestantism – other	1	,9
Atheism	1	2,2
None	2	2,2
Other	5	5,6
Total	90	100,0

Procedures

In addition to the tested new questionnaire, a Polish version of the Scale of Religious Orientation was used to measure criterion validity (Socha, 2009). Subjects were also asked about their religious denomination. Gender was also taken into account (see Table 3).

All the statistics were performed using SPSS Software and Amos Software. Reliability was determined by analyzing internal consistency and item-total correlation coefficients. See Tables 8–10.

After performing Items Statistics, it occurred that four items should be removed, being at the level under 0.2 and therefore not discriminatory enough: 3, 7, 10, 21. The reliability of all items was measured again. See Table 11. Moreover, the reliability of two main scales was measured. See Table 12 and Table 13.

Then construct validity was examined with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was measured in version after removing the four items mentioned above. Bartlett's test and the K-M-O measure were used as measures of the sphericity and sampling adequacy for factor analysis and it revealed to be meritorious. See Table 14 and Table 15. The indicators for criterion validity were the results of Religious Orientation Scales adapted by Socha and colleagues (Socha, 1999).

Results

As mentioned before, outcomes are presented in the form of Tables.

Table 8

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alfa	Number of items
.858	25

Table 9

Total Item Statistics

	The average of the scale after item removal	The variance of the scale after item removal	Item correlation Total	Cronbach's alpha after item removal
QRI 1	78.44	203.024	.381	.854
QRI 2	77.62	195.564	.563	.848
QRI 3	77.41	212.382	.106	.862
QRI 4	77.98	190.862	.613	.846
QRI 5	77.12	195.882	.567	.848
QRI 6	77.13	201.492	.426	.853
QRI 7	76.74	197.783	.582	.848
QRI 8	76.52	202.148	.468	.852
QRI 9	77.43	204.005	.369	.854

	The average of the scale after item removal	The variance of the scale after item removal	Item corre- lation Total	Cronbach's alpha after item removal
QRI 10	76.94	214.350	.075	.862
QRI 11	77.48	196.010	.534	.849
QRI 12	77.50	194.907	.569	.848
QRI 13	77.48	203.872	.340	.855
QRI 14	77.35	194.954	.493	.850
QRI 15	77.16	205.499	.327	.856
QRI 16	76.52	200.631	.459	.852
QRI 17	76.72	212.170	.145	.860
QRI 18	76.82	205.045	.357	.855
QRI 19	77.10	193.196	.613	.846
QRI 20	77.47	208.458	.223	.859
QRI 21	77.49	216.286	-.003	.866
QRI 22	77.26	195.106	.555	.848
QRI 23	78.03	197.991	.505	.850
QRI 24	77.53	201.113	.384	.854
QRI 25	78.72	201.359	.451	.852

However, after performing Items Statistics, it occurred that four items should be removed, being at the level under 0.2 and therefore not discriminatory enough: 3, 7, 10, 21. See Table 6 and Table 7. The reliability was also measured after removing those items. See Table 8.

Table 10

Removed items

3	God and His works are so mysterious and impenetrable that any man can understand them; we can only find the right way [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
7	I want my faith to flow from my own thoughts, not from the teachings of any religious community [D]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
10	When it comes to religion, it is important to keep looking for the truth, even if we have no hope of eventually finding it [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
21	Developing, one must constantly look for new truths in religious faith [Q]	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Table 11
Reliability statistics after removing items 3, 7, 10, 21

Cronbach's Alfa	Number of items
.863	21

Table 12
Doubt Scale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alfa	Number of items
.907	15

Table 13
Quest Scale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alfa	Number of items
.753	6

Figure 1
Exploratory Factor Analysis – Scree plot

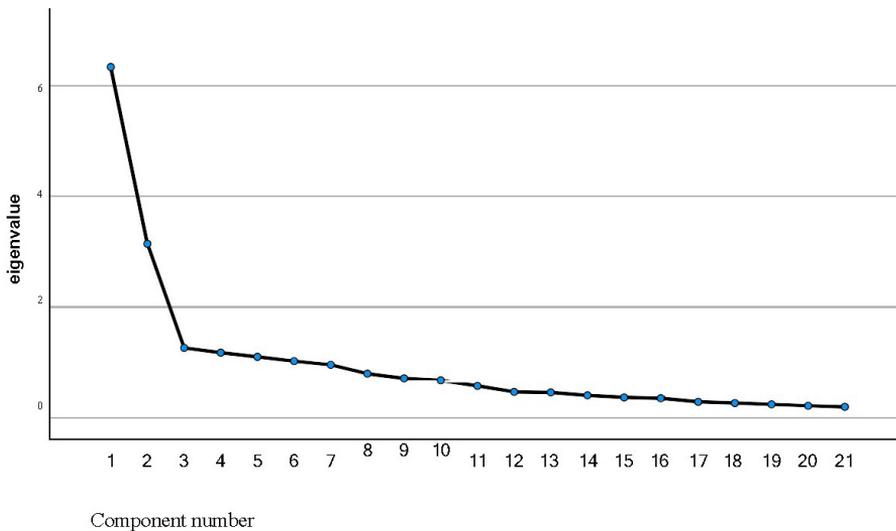


Table 14
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	1343.670
	df
	300
	Sig.
	<.001

Table 15
Exploratory Factor Analysis – Component matrix

	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
QRI 4	.782					
QRI 19	.780					
QRI 2	.730					
QRI 14	.698					
QRI 11	.696					
QRI 5	.688				.358	
QRI 8	.655			.359		
QRI 24	.631	-.307	.301			
QRI 16	.624			.485		
QRI 23	.610		.406		-.423	
QRI 25	.605					
QRI 12	.595					
QRI 1	.528		-.477			.378
QRI 22	.525	.363	.398			
QRI 9		.744				
QRI 20		.706				
QRI 15		.669			-.337	
QRI 18		.637			.310	.384
QRI 17		.564			.353	.561
QRI 6	.310	.544				
QRI 13		.418	-.396	.424		

Exploratory factor analysis proved two main factors, which are orthogonal, and four other factors, which are correlated. However, the item number seems too small to extract them and give them any meaning. The two were used as a basis for a key to the Questionnaire of Religious Insight. See Tables 15 and 16. The others are a clue for further concept and tool development.

Table 16
Key to Questionnaire of Religious Insight

Scale	Items
Doubt ORI	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25
Quest QRI	6, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20
QRI All	1–25 without 3, 7, 10, 21

In order to examine the criterion validity of the proposed concept, correlation calculations were performed. It revealed a statistically proven (significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)) negative correlation between QRI All Items result and Intrinsic SOR Scale (-.415). It also showed a statistically proven (significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed)) positive correlation between QRI All Items result and Quest SOR Scale (.318). See Table 17. QRI Doubt Scale occurred also negatively correlated with Intrinsic ROS Scale (-.566) and it was statistically proven (significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)). See Table 18. Finally, QRI Quest Scale was positively correlated with Quest SOR Scale (.480) and it was also statistically proven (significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)). See Table 19.

Table 17

QRI All Items result – Intrinsic SOR Scale, Extrinsic SOR Scale, Quest SOR Scale

		QRI ALL_
EXTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.143
	N	90
INTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	-.415**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	90
QUEST_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	90

Table 18

QRI Doubt Scale correlation with Intrinsic ROS Scale, Extrinsic SOR Scale, and Quest ROS Scale

		DOUBT_QRI
EXTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.135
	N	90
INTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	-.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	90
QUEST_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.200
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	90

Table 19

QRI Quest Scale correlation with Intrinsic SOR Scale, Extrinsic SOR Scale, and Quest SOR Scale

		QUEST_QRI
EXTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.438
	N	90
INTRINSIC_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.136
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.200
	N	90
QUEST_ROS	Pearson Correlation	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	90

Discussion and conclusions

The proposed tool – Questionnaire of Religious Insights – showed excellent reliability: Cronbach's Alfa .858. Also, Doubt Scale and Quest Scale reliability measured separately are satisfactory: Cronbach's Alfa .907 and Cronbach's Alfa .753. As mentioned, four items were removed after performing Items Statistics, which was not discriminatory enough: 3, 7, 10, 21. Exploratory factor analysis proved two main factors: orthogonal and coincided in content with the theoretical model distinguishing Doubt from Quest (Socha, 1995). Therefore results indicated the validity of the concept proposed by Pargement (1992) and Socha (Socha, 1995). Therefore, the postulated differences between Doubt and Quest have gained some empirical confirmation. Factor analysis also indicated four other factors, which are correlated. However, the item number seems too small to extract and give any meaning. The first two were used as a basis for a key to the Questionnaire of Religious Insight (see Tables 15 and 16).

QRI as an overall measure of religious insights correlates negatively with Intrinsic and positively with Quest Religious Orientation measured with Religious Orientation Scales. This result could be seen as an effect of Batson's postulate that intrinsic religious orientation measured dogmatic attitudes, such as the lack of will to ask questions (Batson, 1976). However, a meta-analysis showed that intrinsic religious orientation "is associated with portions of the dogmatism concept, rather than the entire syndrome" (Donahue, 1985, p. 406) (it correlated with conventionalism, stereotyping, and superstition and did not correlate with cynicism, aggression or projectivity). As Quest religious orientation is related to the overall measure of religious insights seems obvious (Batson, 1976). However, it could confirm QRI's validity by employing an external criterion: the Q scale in ROS.

The QRI Doubt Scale correlates negatively with the I scale in ROS, which served as criterion validity and confirmed its theoretical meaning. The QRI Quest Scale correlates with the Q scale in ROS, which analogically confirms the tool's validity.

The other factors, revealed by factor analysis, are a clue for further concept and tool development. The more so that the disproportion in the number of items in both scales is puzzling. It could be related to the age of the sample. Therefore partially could confirm the primary hypothesis from Socha and Stępień-Nycz studies that Doubt could be related to immature kind of questioning (Socha, 1995; Stępień-Nycz, 2006; quoted with the permission of the author). Removed items may also express Poland's contemporary cultural ideal of religious openness and reflectiveness (Watson et al., 2014). See Table 7. The tool should be tested in an age-diverse group. However, in Polish cultural conditions, it will automatically be more religiously homogeneous (CBOS, 2020).

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