Hypothesis

Based on the research that proposes religious influence on SRGs because they are coming from a sacred source (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009), I posit that implicit measures of religious guilt should correlate with moral guilt.

Methodology

62 subjects were recruited from a departmental subject pool. All subjects religious affiliation were Seventh-day Adventist. An Implicit Association Test measures the strength of association between two different concepts. Each concept contains two categories, and each category contains several attributes. (Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007).

During the IAT, participants rapidly and sequentially classified individual stimuli into one of four distinct categories with only two responses. The faster and more accurate the responses when two categories are paired, the closer association between those concepts (Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007).

We examined correlations between D scores and the subscales from the explicit Guilt Inventory measure.

Results

• D scores (a measure of interference) were calculated using the revised procedure from (Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007) for each subject. I found consistent higher interference with positive concepts of God and guilt-related cognition: all of the subjects’ D scores were in the same direction.

Conclusions

Results support the hypothesis that implicit measures of guilt may be sensitive to internalization of religious self-monitoring. The correlation between an implicit measure of guilt and an explicit measure of moral guilt in religious individuals could be due to internalized religious SRGs. This is consistent with theoretical approaches to religious cognition that suggest that religious SRGs are given priority because they come for a sacred source (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009).