

**Original citation:**

Francis, Leslie J. and Dato, Fazle Abbas. (2012) Inside the mosque : a study in psychological-type profiling. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol.15 (No.10). pp. 1037-1046.

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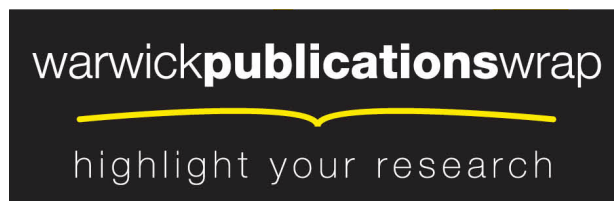
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<http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13674676.2012.709723>

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Inside the mosque: a study in psychological type profiling

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**Abstract**

Within a Christian context a series of studies has profiled religious participation as associated with introversion rather than extraversion and with feeling rather than thinking. The most frequently occurring type in church congregation is ISFJ. In the present study data provided by 48 participants in the mosque demonstrate that within a Muslim context religious participation is associated with extraversion rather than introversion and with thinking rather than feeling. The most frequently occurring types in the mosque are ESTJ and ENTJ. These data caution against generalising findings about the connection between personality and religion from one religious tradition to another.

*Keywords:* psychological type, religion, Islam, mosque

## Introduction

Reviews of empirical studies in the psychology of religion conducted and reported over the past fifty years have highlighted, explicitly or implicitly, just how much this emerging discipline has been shaped within or against the background of the Christian tradition (Argyle, 1958; Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009). Within the past decade or so, a new stream within the empirical psychology of religion has emerged within or against the background of the Islamic tradition, as illustrated by the following studies: Wilde and Joseph (1997), Ghorbani, Watson, Ghramaleki, Morris, and Hood (2000, 2002), Leach, Piedmont, and Monteiro (2001), Hood, Ghorbani, Watson, Ghramaleki, Bing, Davidson, Morris and Williamson (2001), Abdel-Khalek (2002, 2006, 2011), Khan and Watson (2004, 2006, 2010), Ghorbani, Watson, Krauss, Bing and Davison (2004), Khan, Watson and Habib (2005), Ghorbani and Watson (2006), Francis, Sahin, and Al-Ansari (2006), Francis, Sahin, and Al-Failakawi (2008), Johnstone and Tiliopoulos (2008), Abu-Rayya and Abu-Rayya (2009), Ghorbani, Watson, Zarehi, and Shamohammadi (2010), Momtaz, Hamid, Ibrahim, Yahaya, and Chai (2011), Abdel-Khalek and Eid (2011).

A key issue within the empirical psychology of religion concerns the linkages between personality and religion. When Argyle (1958) conducted his early review and assessment of studies in this field, he concluded that the evidence was inconclusive. The same basic conclusion was drawn two decades later by Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975). Two further decades on, however, Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) revised their conclusion. By that stage sufficient evidence, collected in consistent ways, was beginning to prove convincing. The evidence on which Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) drew to support a consistent linkage between personality and religion was rooted in Eysenck's three dimensional model of personality (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). Empirical evidence

consistently linked higher levels of religion with lower scores recorded on Eysenck's third dimension of personality, the psychoticism scale (see for example, Francis, 1992).

Since Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle's review conducted in the mid 1990s, a second body of empirical evidence has emerged situating individual differences within the model of personality developed by Jungian psychological type theory (Jung, 1971) and operationalised through instruments like the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978) or the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005).

This body of empirical research, as drawn together by Francis (2009) and Ross (2011), has followed three main strands, profiling religious professionals, profiling religious congregations, and exploring different expressions of religious and spiritual experience. Once again, however, these studies have been conducted almost entirely within the context of or against the background of the Christian tradition.

The present study proposes to extend this research tradition within the empirical psychology of religion, drawing on psychological type theory, into an Islamic context. While a series of studies has examined the psychological type profile of church congregations this is the first study to examine the psychological type profile of those attending an Islamic mosque. The background for this new study needs to be set by an introduction to psychological type theory and by a resumé of the research conducted within church congregations.

### **Psychological type theory**

At its core psychological type theory distinguishes between two perceiving functions, two judging functions, two orientations, and two attitudes toward the outer world. In each of these four areas, psychological type theory conceptualises differences in terms of two discrete categories (or types) rather than in terms of a continuum stretching between two poles.

The perceiving functions are concerned with identifying ways in which individuals take in information. For Jung, the perceiving processes were described as irrational processes because they were not concerned with data evaluation but simply with data gathering. In this area, the two discrete types are defined as sensing and as intuition. For sensing types, the preferred way of perceiving is through the five senses. Sensors are motivated by facts, details and information. They build up to the big picture slowly by focusing first on the component parts. They are most comfortable in the present moment rather than in exploring possibilities. They are realistic and practical people. They are realistic practical people. For intuitive types, the preferred way of perceiving is through their imagination. Intuitives are motivated by theories, ideas and connections. They begin with the big picture and gradually give attention to the component parts. They are more comfortable planning the future than making do with the present. They are inspirational and visionary people.

The judging functions are concerned with identifying ways in which individuals evaluate information. For Jung, the judging processes were described as the rational processes because they were concerned with data evaluation and with decision making. In this area, the two discrete types are defined as thinking and as feeling. For thinking types the preferred way of judging is through objective analysis and dispassionate logic. They are concerned with the good running of systems and organizations and put such strategic issues first. They are logical and fair-minded people who are attracted to the God of justice. For feeling types, the preferred way of judging is through subjective evaluation and personal involvement. They are concerned with the good relationships between people and put such inter-personal issues first. They are humane and warm-hearted people who are attracted to the God of mercy.

The orientations are concerned with identifying the sources of psychological energy. In this area, the two discrete types are defined as extraversion and introversion. For extravert

types, the source of energy is located in the outer world of people and things. Extraverts are exhausted by large periods of solitude and silence; and they need to re-energize through the stimulation they receive from people and places. Extraverts are talkative people who feel at home in social contexts. For introvert types, the source of energy is located in the inner world of ideas and reflection. Introverts are exhausted by long periods of social engagements and sounds; and they need to re-energize through the stimulation they receive from their own company and tranquility.

The attitudes (often more fully expressed as the 'attitudes toward the outer world') are concerned with identifying which of the two processes (judging or perceiving) individuals prefer to use in the outer world. In this area, the two discrete types are defined by the name of the preferred process, either judging or perceiving. For judging types, their preferred judging function (either thinking or feeling) is employed in their outer world. Because their outer world is where the rational, evaluating, judging or decision making processes is deployed, judging types appear to others to be well organized decisive people. For perceiving types, their preferred perceiving function (either sensing or intuition) is employed in their outer world. Because their outer world is where the irrational, data gathering process is deployed, perceiving types appear to others to be laid-back, flexible, even disorganised people.

### **Profiling church congregations**

Research concerned with establishing the psychological type profile of churchgoers was initially based on quite small samples. In the United States of America, Gerhardt (1983) reported on 83 adult Unitarian Universalists, and Rehak (1998) reported on 76 Evangelical Lutherans. In Canada, Delis-Bulhoes (1990) reported on 48 Catholics and 154 Protestants, and Ross (1993, 1995) reported on 116 Anglicans and 175 Catholics. In Wales, Craig, Francis, Bailey, and Robbins (2003) reported on 101 Anglicans, and Francis, Robbins, Williams, and Williams (2007) reported on 185 Anglicans. In England, Francis, Butler, Jones,

and Craig (2007) reported on 158 Anglicans, Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004) reported on 327 Anglicans, and Village, Francis, and Craig (2009) reported on 290 Anglicans. More recently there have been two much larger studies reported by Robbins and Francis (2011) among 1527 churchgoers across 18 denominations in Australia and reported by Francis, Robbins and Craig (2011) among 3304 Anglicans in England.

There are considerable variations in the data reported by studies conducted among churchgoers, depending perhaps on the type of church studied, the method used for data collection, or the measure of psychological type employed. Nonetheless, some consistent patterns emerge. In the Christian tradition, religious participation tends to be associated with introversion rather than extroversion, with sensing rather than intuition, with feeling rather than thinking, and with judging rather than perceiving. For example, in their study of 327 Anglican churchgoers in England, Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004) found introversion (59%), sensing (72%), feeling (64%), and judging (68%). The most frequently represented of the 16 complete types was ISJF (17%). In their study of 3304 Anglican churchgoers in England, Francis, Robbins, and Craig (2011) found introversion (54%), sensing (80%), feeling (60%) and judging (86%). The most frequently represented of the 16 complete types was ISFJ (22%).

Perhaps especially within the Anglican tradition the connection between the ISFJ profile and religious participation makes good sense. A preference for introversion might be associated with spirituality rooted more in the inner solitary life, rather than in the outer communal life. A preference for sensing might be associated with spirituality rooted more in connection with a long tradition, familiarity and stability, rather than in innovative spiritual quest. A preference for feeling might be associated with spirituality rooted more in attachment to the God of mercy, rather than to the God of justice. A preference for judging



might be associated with spirituality rooted more in an ordered liturgical rhythm, rather than in flexible and spontaneous expression.

In her booklet, *Introduction to Type*, Myers (1998, p. 7) provides an insightful profile of the ISFJ type:

Quiet, friendly, responsible and conscientious. Work devotedly to meet their obligations. Lend stability to any project or group. Thorough, painstaking, accurate. Their interests are usually not technical. Can be patient with necessary details. Loyal, considerate, perceptive, concerned with how other people feel.

Here is a description that may characterise the soul of a particular kind of Christian spirituality. The ISFJ profile also provides one further clue about the psychological characteristics of Anglican Christianity, at least as expressed in England. According to the UK population norms for psychological type distribution as reported by Kendall (1998) the ISFJ profile is significantly more prevalent among women than among men (18% compared with 7%). While in the population as a whole 70% of women prefer feeling, the proportion falls to 35% among men. Here in psychological categories is an expression of what Brown (2001) characterises as the ‘feminisation’ of the churches in Britain.

While these patterns connecting psychological type with religious participation have been demonstrated within a Christian context in England (and more widely, see Robbins and Francis, 2011), the pioneering work reported by Loewenthal, MacLeod and Cinnirella (2002) cautions against generalising observed connections between gender and religiosity within a Christian context to other religious traditions.

Against this background, the present study set out to replicate within a Muslim mosque the two studies among participants in Anglican churches reported by Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004) and by Francis, Robbins, and Craig (2011).

## **Method**

**Procedure**

Participants engaged in two programmes at the mosque (the weekly majlis programme and the Salatal Juma) were invited to complete the survey instrument. Almost half of the participants accepted the invitation, with completed questionnaires being returned by 37 men and 11 women, a response rate of 46%.

**Instrument**

Psychological type was assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS). This is a 40-item instrument comprising four sets of 10 forced-choice items related to each of the four components of psychological type: orientation (extraversion or introversion), perceiving process (sensing or intuition), judging process (thinking or feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging or perceiving). Recent studies have demonstrated that this instrument functions well in church-related contexts. For example, Francis, Craig, and Hall (2008) reported alpha coefficients of .83 for the EI scale, .76 for the SN scale, .73 for the TF scale, and .79 for the JP scale.

**Sample**

Of the 48 participants, 37 were male and 11 were female; 23 were under the age of thirty, 16 were in their thirties and forties, and 9 were aged fifty or over.

**Data analysis**

In view of the small sample, male and female responses will be analysed together and compared with the aggregated responses of the 327 male and female Anglican churchgoers reported by Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004). The research literature concerning the empirical investigation of psychological type has developed a highly distinctive method for analyzing, handling, and displaying statistical data in the form of 'type tables'. This convention has been adopted in the following presentation in order to integrate these new data within the established literature and to provide all the detail necessary for secondary

analysis and further interpretation within the rich theoretical framework afforded by psychological type. Type tables have been designed to provide information about the sixteen discrete psychological types, about the four dichotomous preferences, about the six sets of pairs and temperaments, about the dominant types, and about the introverted and extraverted Jungian types. Commentary on this table will, however, be restricted to those aspects of the data strictly relevant to the research question. Type tables are also designed to test the statistical significance of differences between the two groups (in the present study between participants in the mosque and participants in the church). This is calculated by means of the selection ratio (*I*), an extension of the chi-square test (McCaulley, 1985).

### Results

The type distribution for the 48 participants in the mosque is presented in Table 1.

- Insert table 1 -

These data demonstrate clear preferences for extraversion (69%) over introversion (31%), for sensing (60%) over intuition (40%), for thinking (56%) over feeling (44%) and for judging (81%) over perceiving (19%). In terms of dominant types, 38% were dominant thinking types, 27% were dominant sensing types, 21% were dominant feeling types, and 15% were dominant intuitive types. The predominant types were ESTJ (17%), ENTJ (17%) and ESFJ (15%).

Table 1 also compares the psychological type profile of the 48 participants in the mosque with the 327 Anglican churchgoers reported by Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004). These data demonstrate that, in terms of dichotomous type preferences, the participants in the mosque were significantly more likely to prefer extraversion than the churchgoers (69% compared with 41%), and significantly more likely to prefer thinking (50% compared with 36%). There were no significant differences between the two groups on the perceiving process (60% in the mosque preferred sensing and so did 72% in the church)

or on the attitudes toward the outer world (81% in the mosque preferred judging and so did 68% in the church). In terms of dominant type preferences, the significant difference between the two groups concerns the much higher proportion of dominant thinking types in the mosque (38% compared with 14% in the church). In terms of the 16 complete types two types were significantly more in evidence in the mosque than in the church, namely ESTJ (17% compared with 5%) and ENTJ (17% compared with 2%).

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The present study set out to examine the psychological type profile of participants within the mosque and to compare this profile with the established profile of participants in church congregations. The statistical significance of this comparison was established by setting new data provided by 48 participants in the mosque against the study of 327 Anglican churchgoers reported by Francis, Duncan, Craig, and Luffman (2004). Five main conclusions can be drawn from these data.

The first conclusion concerns the attitude toward the outer world. The majority of participants in the mosque preferred applying the judging process in the outer world (81%). In this respect participants in the mosque reflect the same preference as participants in churches. Both religious traditions may speak to a spirituality shaped by structure, discipline and order, in which people with a preference for judging may feel at home.

The second conclusion concerns the perceiving process. The majority of participants in the mosque preferred using the sensing function (60%). In this respect, too, participants in the mosque reflect the same preference as participants in the churches. Both religious traditions may speak to a spirituality shaped by respect for tradition, regard for authority and concern for detail, characteristics valued by people with a preference for sensing.

The third conclusion concerns the judging process. The majority of participants in the mosque preferred using the thinking function (56%). In this respect participants in the

mosque display a different preference from participants in the church, where the majority preferred feeling. The two religious traditions may speak to somewhat different spiritualities. The church may tend to reflect an environment in which the people with a preference for feeling are at home, while the mosque may tend to reflect an environment in which people with a preference for thinking are at home. These psychological preferences may resonate with somewhat different theological emphases. A psychological preference for feeling may resonate more with a theological perspective emphasising the God of mercy. A psychological preference for thinking may resonate more with a theological perspective emphasising the God of justice.

The fourth conclusion concerns the orientations. The majority of participants in the mosque preferred extraversion (69%). In this respect, too, participants in the mosque display a different preference from participants in the church, where the majority preferred introversion. Again, the two religious traditions may speak to somewhat different spiritualities. The church may tend to reflect an introverted environment in which relationship with God emphasises the inward and personal, while the mosque may tend to reflect an outward environment in which relationships with God emphasises the outward and communal. These psychological preferences may resonate with somewhat different theological emphases. A psychological preference for introversion may begin from the personal relationship with God and lead to commitment to the religious community. A psychological preference for extraversion may begin from commitment to the religious community and lead to the personal relationship with God.

The fifth conclusion draws together the four preferences displayed by the psychological type profile of the participants in the mosque. These participants preferred extraversion over introversion, sensing over intuition, thinking over feeling, and judging over

perceiving. In her booklet, *Introduction to type*, Myers (1998 p. 7) provides the following profile of those who prefer extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging (ESTJ):

Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact, with a natural head for business or mechanics. Not interested in abstract theories; want learning to have direct and immediate application. Like to organise and run activities. Often make good administrators; are decisive, quickly move to implement decisions; take care of routine details.

Here is a description that may characterise the soul of a particular kind of Islamic spirituality.

The present study set out to test the potential contribution of psychological type theory to a growing body of research developing an empirical psychology of religion within an Islamic context. The major weakness of the study concerns the small sample, the low response rate (46%), the focus on just one mosque and on the sampling points within that mosque. As a pilot, however, the present study has clearly demonstrated both that this kind of research is acceptable within the mosque and that the findings may help to illuminate the distinctive contribution made by the mosque to the rich tapestry of spiritualities within multi-faith Britain.

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Table 1

Type distribution for participants in the mosque, compared with churchgoers

N = 48 (NB: + = 1% of N)

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences		
ISTJ n = 6 (12.5%) I = 0.74 +++++	ISFJ n = 6 (12.5%) I = 0.72 +++++	INFJ n = 0 (0%) I = 0.00 +++++	INTJ n = 1 (2.1%) I = 1.14 ++	E n = 33 (68.8%) I = 1.69***	I n = 15 (31.3%) I = 0.53***	
				S n = 29 (60.4%) I = 0.84	N n = 19 (39.6%) I = 1.42	
				T n = 27 (56.3%) I = 1.57**	F n = 21 (43.8%) I = 0.68**	
				J n = 39 (81.3%) I = 1.20	P n = 9 (18.8%) I = 0.58	
The Sixteen Complete Types				Pairs and Temperaments		
ISTP n = 1 (2.1%) I = 0.45 ++	ISFP n = 0 (0%) I = 0.00	INFP n = 0 (0%) I = 0.00	INTP n = 1 (2.1%) I = 0.76 ++	IJ n = 13 (27.1%) I = 0.67	IP n = 2 (4.2%) I = 0.22*	EP n = 7 (14.6%) I = 1.11
				EJ n = 26 (54.2%) I = 1.97***		
				ST n = 16 (33.3%) I = 1.17	SF n = 13 (27.1%) I = 0.62*	NF n = 8 (16.7%) I = 0.81
				NT n = 11 (22.9%) I = 3.12***		
ESTP n = 1 (2.1%) I = 0.97 ++	ESFP n = 0 (0%) I = 0.00	ENFP n = 5 (10.4%) I = 1.48 +++++	ENTP n = 1 (2.1%) I = 3.41 ++	SJ n = 27 (56.3%) I = 1.02	SP n = 2 (4.2%) I = 0.24*	NP n = 7 (14.6%) I = 0.97
				NJ n = 12 (25.0%) I = 1.95*		
ESTJ n = 8 (16.7%) I = 3.41** +++++	ESFJ n = 7 (14.6%) I = 0.92 +++++	ENFJ n = 3 (6.3%) I = 1.36 +++++	ENTJ n = 8 (16.7%) I = 7.79*** +++++	TJ n = 23 (47.9%) I = 1.87***	TP n = 4 (8.3%) I = 0.83	FP n = 5 (10.4%) I = 0.47
				FJ n = 16 (33.3%) I = 0.79		
				IN n = 2 (4.2%) I = 0.31	EN n = 17 (35.4%) I = 2.46***	IS n = 13 (27.1%) I = 0.59*
				ES n = 16 (33.3%) I = 1.27		
				ET n = 18 (37.5%) I = 3.83***	EF n = 15 (31.3%) I = 1.01	IF n = 6 (12.5%) I = 0.38**
				IT n = 9 (18.8%) I = 0.72		

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types					
	n	%	Index		n	%	Index		n	%	Index
E-TJ	16	33.3	4.74***	I-TP	2	4.2	0.57	Dt.T	18	37.5	2.61***
E-FJ	10	20.8	1.02	I-FP	0	0.0	0.00*	Dt.F	10	20.8	0.65
ES-P	1	2.1	0.38	IS-J	12	25.5	0.73	Dt.S	13	27.1	0.68
EN-P	6	12.5	1.64	IN-J	1	2.1	0.34	Dt.N	7	14.6	1.06

Note: N = + =1% of N \* p < .05 \*\* p < .01 \*\*\* p < .001