

The Relationship Between Religion and a Person's Perceptions of Success Factors



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Introduction

- Luck and hard are found to be crucial to success, but many people are not aware of how each factor contributes to success (Pluchino, Biondo, & Rapisarda; 2018).
- Perceptions of success factors may influence society in many ways. An example would be public policy which, in turn, can influence labor market institutions (Daniels & Wang, 2019).
- There are emerging studies that explore the effects of factors in success such as attitude (DeMarree, 2017). Some other factors are workplace discrimination, status, and participation (Fisman & O'Neill, 2009).
- Success is measured differently between men and women (Justo, Castro, Coduras, & Cruz, 2006). However, not much research has been conducted to examine how sex differences view factors that lead to success.

Methods

Sample

- The General Social Survey consisted of 4,032 people who identify as female or male. They were 18 or older. The codebook included people who identified as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Orthodox-Christian, Christian, and of other religions.
- The General Social Survey consists of noninstitutional adults in the United States. Data was collected through online, cross-sectional interviews since 1972.

Measures

- Religion was measured by the individual's perceptions of how religious they are, or their religious extent. This was measured on a four-point scale where one was very religious and four was not religious.
- Individuals' perceptions of success factors was measured on a three-point scale where one was hard work and three was luck.
- Sex was recorded based on whether the individual identified as male or female.

Research Questions

What is the relationship between religion and the perception of whether luck versus hard work is more important for success?
Does sex relate to people's perceptions of success factors such as luck and hard work?

Results

Univariate

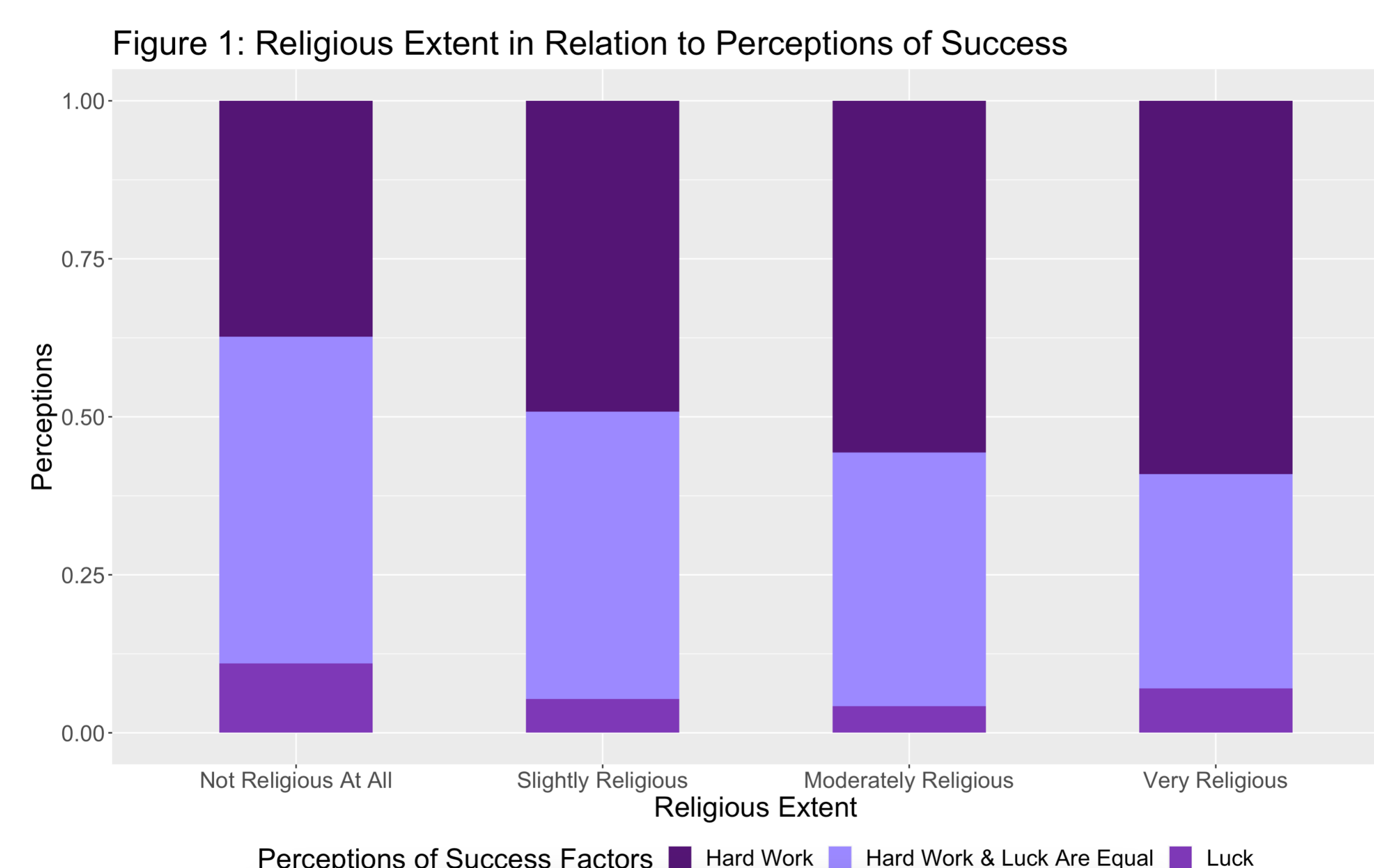
- A majority of 69% of people are religious at some level. Of the religious population sample, 32% identify as moderately religious.
- 48% of people believe hard work is the sole most important factor in achieving success.

Bivariate

- In figure 1, chi-Squared analysis showed that people with any religious extent were significantly related to higher rates of believing hard work is the most important success factor than nonreligious people ($X^2 = 44.585, 6 df, p < 0.001$).
- Coincidentally, through post-hoc testing, slightly, moderately, and strongly religious people were significantly related to believing more in hard work as the sole contributor to success than nonreligious people ($p < 0.001$ for all).
- As portrayed in figure 1: The odds of a person believing hard work is the most important factor for success decreases with their religious extent.

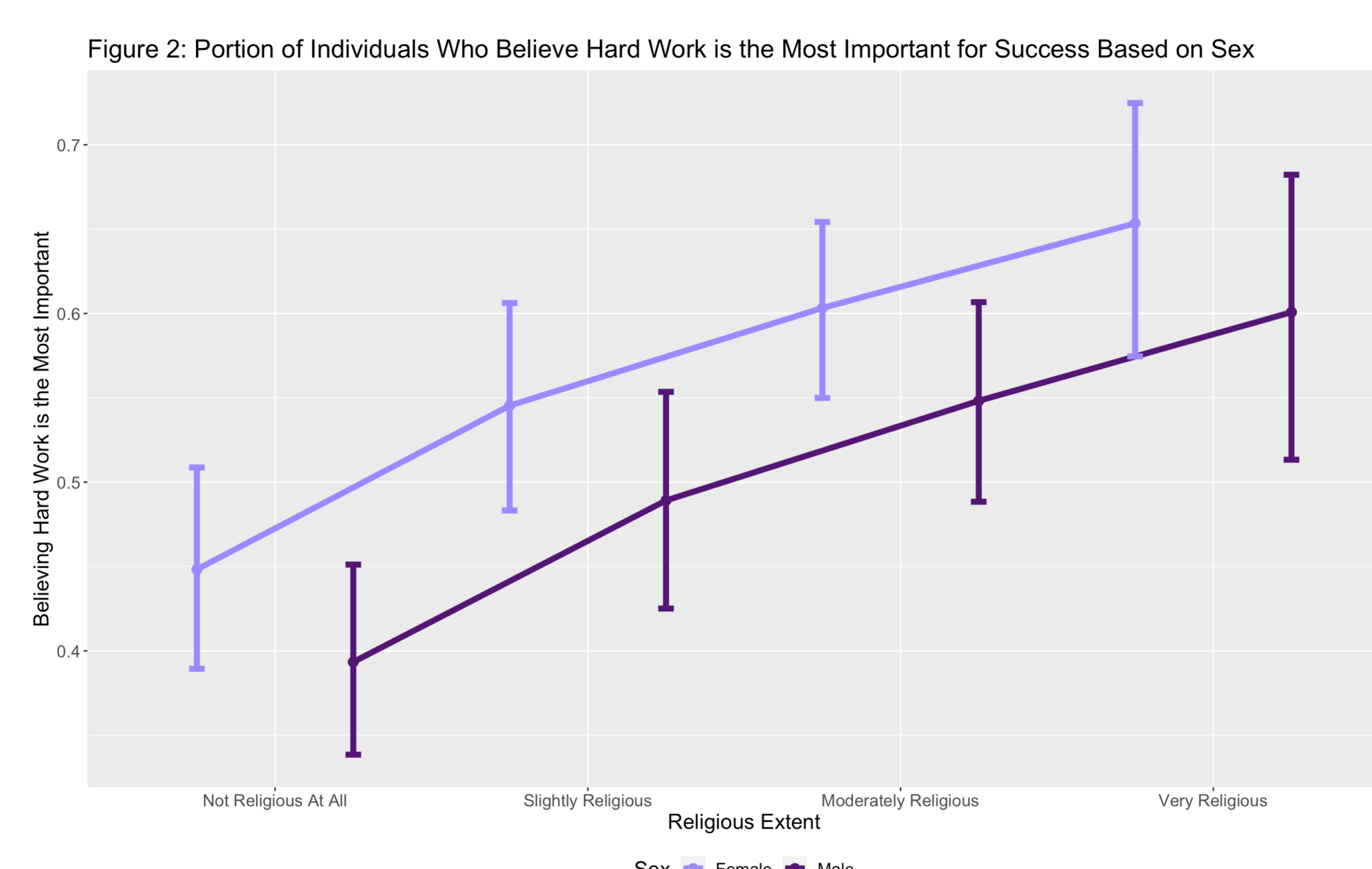
Multivariate

- In figure 2, results of logistic regression show that religious extent is increasingly related to believing in hard work as the sole contributor to success. All levels of religious extent were shown to be significant: slightly religious ($p < 0.01$), moderately religious ($p < 0.001$), and very religious ($p < 0.001$).
- In figure 2, religious extent still has a significant, positive relationship with perceptions of hard work contributing to success after controlling for sex.
- Inversely, sex is almost significantly related to higher perceptions of hard work in success ($p = 0.0548$).
- In this sample, men showed to be 0.8 times less likely than women to believe that hard work is the most important factor in success ($O.R. 0.8, CI 0.63 - 1.00$).



Multivariate (cont.)

- The odds of slightly religious people believing more in hard work being the biggest contributor to success is 1.5 times more than nonreligious people ($O.R. 1.5, CI 1.08 - 2.01$).



- Moderately religious are significantly 1.9 times more likely to believe that hard work is the most prominent aspect of success than nonreligious people are ($O.R. 1.9, CI 1.40 - 2.50$).
- Compared to nonreligious people, strongly religious people are significantly 2.3 times more likely to believe in hard work being the most important factor of success ($O.R. 2.3, CI 1.58 - 3.43$).

Discussion

- More religious individuals tend to believe more in hard work being the most responsible factor for success.
- Less religious individuals tend to deem luck as a vital component of success in some way.
- More research should be conducted to determine the relationship between sex and perceptions of success factors.
- Notably, the measures in which people were asked questions were of their own perspectives and self-image. People's definitions of success, luck, hard work, and religion may vary.
- Future research could dive into this association and explore thought processes or experiences that shape individuals' perspectives of seemingly loosely related phenomena.
- A step that can be taken is investigating if these success perceptions and mindsets have a relation with behavior and actual success outcomes.

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