



Importance of Religion and Politics among Southeastern College Students



Chassidy Overstreet, Melissa Eagar & Madison Davis

The Embassy Global Learning Village
Tennessee Technological University

Introduction

Since the birth of the United States there has been controversy over the separation of church and state. Oxford's dictionary defined religiosity as a strong religious belief or feeling. Politics is defined as the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power. This study evaluated the importance of religion and politics, and how they influenced Southeastern college students.

Abstract

Through a convenience sampling of 116 participants, this study attempted to evaluate the relationship of the importance and perceptions of political and religious views. It was hypothesized that the importance of religion and politics would be significantly related to the perception of positive influences of religion and politics on campus. Participants voluntarily completed an online questionnaire that assessed these variables. A correlation revealed a significant relationship between the importance of both politics/religion and the students' belief that politics/religion on campus is a positive influence.

Methods

Online questionnaire:

- Politics and Religiosity measured on a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale
 - The Satisfaction with Life Scale
- Of the 116 participants:
- Males 56.9%, Females 43.1%
 - 76% self-identified as Christian
 - Mean age 19.92

Results

- Data showed a significant positive correlation between the importance of politics and the students' belief that politics on campus is a positive influence [$r(114) = .34, p = .001$].
- In addition, there was a significant positive correlation between religiosity and the students' belief that religion on campus is a positive influence [$r(114) = .53, p = .001$].
- Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between the students' perception that campus has a very religious "feel" and their belief that religion on campus is a positive influence [$r(114) = .36, p = .001$].
- All other comparisons were nonsignificant.

Discussion

The data supported the initial hypothesis. The current study was limited to a small sample size with only a 116 participants. Ideally, this survey would contain many participants from the Southeastern region, not just students at Tennessee Tech University.

Further research could be conducted to identify other variables to what constitutes an individual to be a strongly religious person, such as how often they go to church and what they do at church. In addition within politics, how involved an individual is in local and national elections, if they voted, and if they attend political rallies.

The study found that students who believed that Tech's campus has a very religious "feel" also believed that religion on Tech's campus is a positive influence. In addition, students who believed that Tech's campus has a very political "feel" also believed that politics on Tech's campus is a positive influence.

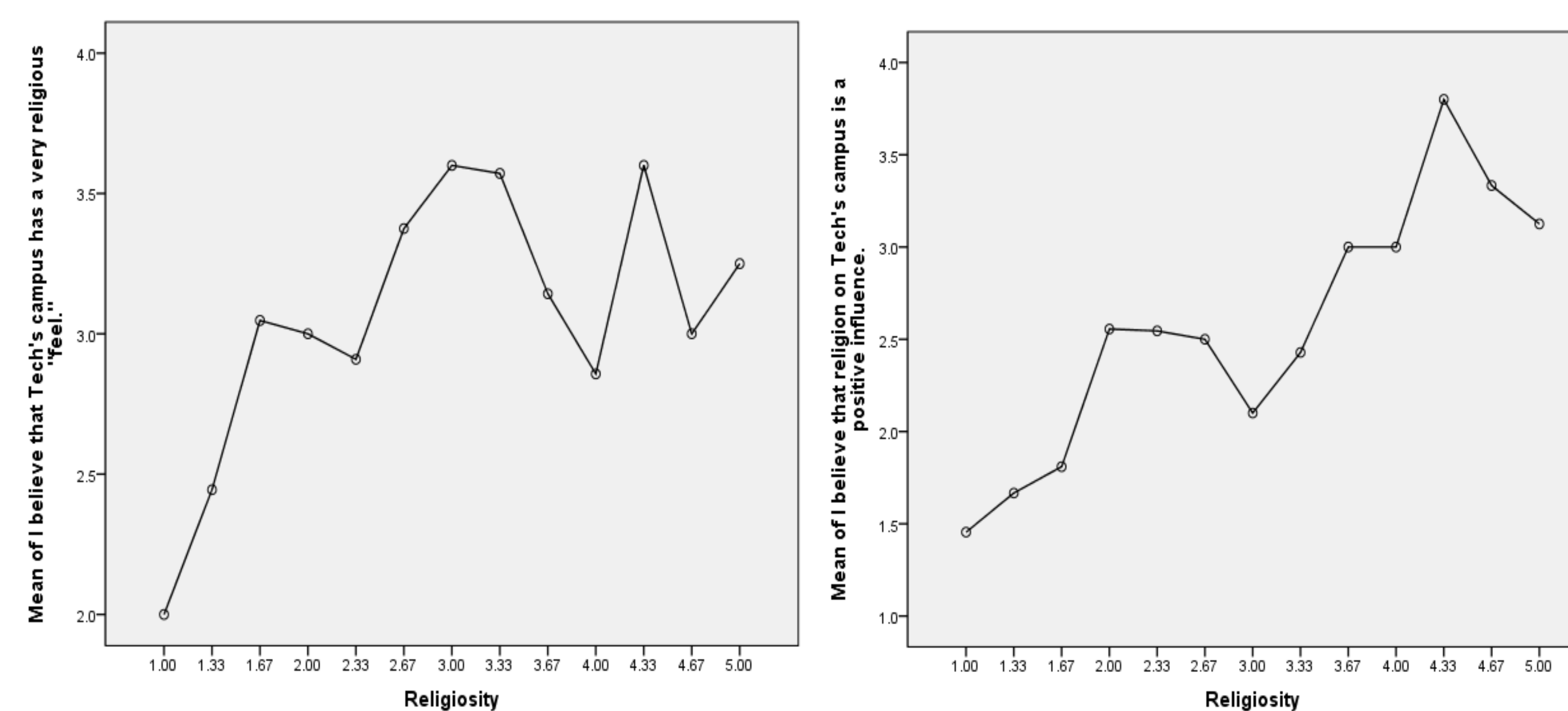
Conclusion

It was hypothesized that the importance of religion and politics would be significantly related to the perception of positive influences of religion and politics on campus. In conclusion, one's perception of reality is shaped by what we want to see. If religion is important, it is seen as a positive influence and if politics are important it is seen as a positive influence.

References

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Religiosity



Politics

