

Numinous Luminosity: A Mixed Methods Study of Mystical Light Experiences

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Abstract : Experiences of a divine or mystical light are frequently reported in religious/spiritual experiences today, most notably in the context of mystical and near-death experiences. Light of a transcendental nature and its experiences of it are also widely present and highly valued in many religious and mystical traditions. Despite the significance of this luminosity to the topic of religious experience, efforts to study the phenomenon empirically have been minimal and scattered. This mixed methods study developed and validated a questionnaire for the measurement of numinous luminosity experience and investigated the dimensions and effects of this novel construct using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A sequential explanatory design (participant selection model) was used, which involved a scale development phase, followed by a correlational study testing hypotheses about its effects on beliefs and well-being derived from the literature, and lastly, a phenomenological study of a sample selected from the correlational phase results. The outcomes of the study are a unified theoretical model of numinous luminosity experience across multiple experiential contexts, initial correlational findings regarding the possible mechanism of its reported positive transformational effects, and a valid and reliable instrument for its further empirical study.

Keywords : religious experience, mystical experience, near-death experience, scale development, questionnaire, divine light, mystical light, mystical luminosity

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