

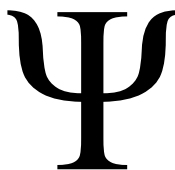
**ODJEL ZA PSIHOLOGIJU  
SVEUČILIŠTE U ZADRU**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR**

**MEĐUNARODNI ZNANSTVENO - STRUČNI SKUP**

**XX. DANI PSIHOLOGIJE  
U ZADRU**

**20th PSYCHOLOGY DAYS IN ZADAR**



**19. - 21. svibanj / May 2016.  
ZADAR/ CROATIA**

Odjel za psihologiju, Sveučilište u Zadru  
Department of Psychology, University of Zadar

## **XX. DANI PSIHOLOGIJE U ZADRU 20<sup>TH</sup> PSYCHOLOGY DAYS IN ZADAR**

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#### ***NAPOMENA***

Osim tehničkog prilagođavanja sažetaka, urednici nisu intervenirali u tekst. Samo u nekoliko iznimnih slučajeva izvršene su manje korekcije, koje nisu izmijenile smisao teksta.

#### ***NOTE***

Apart from some technical interventions, the editors have not altered the texts. In a few exceptions only, some corrections have been made, which have not affected the meaning of the text.

## CAN RELIGION BE IN SERVICE OF EVOLUTION? RELIGIOUSNESS, FITNESS, AND THE AGE OF FIRST REPRODUCTION

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The attempts have been made recently to understand religion from the evolutionary standpoint. While some authors believe that it is a cultural adaptation which facilitates in-group cooperation, others think that religiousness can be positively linked with fitness (longevity and reproductive success). In the present research we explored the relations between religiousness, fitness (measured by the number of descendants), the age of first reproduction and environmental factors (the size of the place of origin, quality of the relations between the parents and the presence of serious illness during the lifetime). Participants were selected from the population of persons in a post-reproductive period (N=191; Mean age=66.5 years; 65% females). We postulated the hypotheses that religiousness is not related to fitness; however, it may facilitate reproduction by lowering the age of first reproduction.

Results showed that there is no association between the religiousness and the number of children. A negative effect of religiousness on the number of grandchildren is detected. Furthermore, religious persons tend to reproduce earlier in their lifetime. Finally, a significant interaction between the quality of parental relations and participants' religiousness in the prediction of the first age of reproduction has been detected: religious persons have especially low age of first reproduction if they lived in families where parents did not agree well. Our results are generally in line with the hypothesis that religiousness do not facilitate fitness, thus it does not represent biological adaptation, at least not in contemporary populations. Negative effects of the religiousness on the number of grandchildren should be viewed with caution: it could be based on a cohort effect and characteristic only for one generation. However, the relation between the religiousness and lower age of first reproduction is possibly robust. The link itself and the finding that it is enhanced in unfavorable environmental conditions are in the line with Life History Theory (analytical framework for understanding the trade-offs in reproductive behavior). Results suggest that religiousness can be considered as a Life History trait which facilitates earlier reproduction, especially when environment is scarce or unpredictable. In this manner religion could be evolutionary-relevant phenomenon.

**Ključne riječi / Keywords:** religiousness, fitness, age of first reproduction, Life History Theory

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