

Relationship between Religious Attitude and Social acceptance with Happiness among MA. Students Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz 2014-15

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ABSTRACT: The present research aims at investigating the relationship between religious attitude and social acceptance with happiness among MA students in Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz in academic year 2014-15. The sample include 370 students (185 male and 185 female students). They were selected through stratified random sampling. The research tools were Religious Attitude Scale (Khodayarifard and Qobari Bonab 1995), social acceptance questionnaire (Crowne and Marlowe 1960), and oxford happiness questionnaire (Argyle and Loo, 1989). The research design was correlational. Pearson correlation coefficient and Stepwise Multivariate Regression were used to analyze the data. The results showed that a significant positive relationship exists between religious attitude and social acceptance with students' happiness. Also, religious attitude and social acceptance are the predictors of happiness in students, respectively.

Keywords: religious attitude, social acceptance, happiness.

INTRODUCTION

What is happiness? What factors increase happiness? What are the factors affecting happiness? "Happiness" is the most important human psychological needs which has a major impact on the formation of personality and mental health and all human beings want happiness for themselves and their loved ones.

Happiness which is the common goal of all men and everyone try to reach it, is people assessment of themselves and their lives. These assessments may have cognitive aspects, such as judgments made about the pleasures of life, or the emotional aspect which includes mood and emotions which are appeared in response to life events. (Vanaki, 2012)

Happiness consists of several components that include: life satisfaction, positive and pleasant emotions and moods and lack of negative emotions (Daineer, 2000 or 1997?).

Happy people have consistent and helpful thoughts and behaviors. Such people look affairs with a clear vision, and pray. They directly try to solve the problems and ask help from others timely. On the other hand, unhappy people think and act pessimistically. They plunge into fantasies. They blame themselves and others and avoid working to solve the problems. (Alizadeh, 2012)

"Religion is one of the most effective factors in human history. Religious attitude consists of Monotheistic coherent and integrated beliefs that knows God as the center of affairs and adjusts values, ethics, customs and traditions in human behaviors with each other, nature and oneself. (Psychology and religion, No. 15, 2011)

Peterson believes that religion is a set of individual and collective beliefs, feelings and actions which is organized around the concept of ultimate reality or a sacred affair. (Psychology and religion, No. 12, 2010)

William James, the father of psychology, believes that love and religious forces lead to dignity, patience and confidence in the person. (Religion and psychology. Translated by Qaeni, 1993)

One of the issues affecting happiness, which is the emotional support and a means for positive change in life events, is religious attitude. People with religious orientation and the belief that there is a high destination in the world, can improve their happiness. (Daineer, 2008)

Religion promotes happiness in several ways. For example, religious practices, such as attendance at mosques increase interaction and social support. In addition, the development of personal relationship with God, promotes happiness by reducing stress and improving strategies to cope with stress. Also, religion gives meaning to personal life. (Ellison, 1991) Also a positive significant relationship is shown between happiness and religious beliefs¹. (Psychology and religion. No. 19, 2012)

In today's unbridled world, where material things dominate everything, emotions, feelings, philanthropy etc. are going to be forgotten. In a world where poverty, war, corruption are increasing every day, nothing but spiritual and religious support and internal change cannot save human being from all these turmoil and disunity and psychological disintegration. (Bani Adam, 2011)

Happy people are healthy, educated, eccentric, religious and optimistic. Also happy people have strong friendly relations and stable religious views. Some theorists know that achieving happiness is possible through attention to values and spiritual objectives, fundamental needs, the significance of life and love of God. "(Mirshah Jafari, 2002) Religion has been an integral part of human life at all ages. According to Franckel, the founder of the school of logotherapy, there is a deep and genuine religious feeling deep in the unconscious mind of every person. Religious attitudes and beliefs have a certain impact on the significance of people lives. Practices such as worship, pilgrimage and reliance on God can lead to inner peace by bringing hope and encouragement to positive attitudes. Meaning in life, hope in God in difficult conditions, benefiting from social and spiritual support, having a sense of belonging to a prominent source are all the ways that religious people having it can incur less pressure in dealing with damaging events. The role of spirituality in promoting peace, mental health and happiness, even its impact on reducing mental disorders and social abnormalities led to witness the growth and development of religion psychology and spirituality in different aspects" (Hosseini and Ejari, quoted by Alizadeh, 2012).

"Human beings are social creatures. Man is born in the community and in community can survive in communication with others and can improve his life quality, mental health and happiness in the community. Man can better know himself in communication with others, understand his features and capabilities and in general, to achieve a true and realistic image of himself (Sharafuddin, 2010).

A group of people always speak in accordance with their beliefs and opinions, and another group speak so to be approved by others. Talking and behaving according to expectations of others is called social acceptance. Social acceptance is as a continuum that very high social acceptance is at one end of it and very low social acceptance is at the other end of it (i.e., it includes those who do not deform their comments and experiences). It seems that a moderate level of social acceptance is necessary to satisfy different needs. High social acceptance has several positive outcomes. Like acceptance, increased confidence, internal and external happiness and joyfulness. While low social acceptance may cause psychological problems such as loneliness, negative self-worth, anxiety and even depression, and academic problems (Kirk et al., 1993, quoted from Pakas Lahti, 2002, quoted from Moradi 2011).

Of course incontestable conformity with community is not approved by psychology scholars. As Hoornay says neurotic people in their search for love and blindly approval try to make others happy. They try to follow the expectations of others, they are afraid of self-expression, and are quite upset with hostility of others and their hostile feelings (Feist and Feist, translated by Seyyed Mohammadi, 2007, quoted by Moradi 2011).

Accordingly, people should not too conventional act in accordance with their expectations and demands to draw the approval of others in all circumstances. "(Taghizadeh, 2012)

According to Argyle, Martin and Lou, three basic components of happiness are positive emotions, life satisfaction and the absence of negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. He and his colleagues found that positive relations with others, life purposefulness, personal growth, loving others and nature are part of happiness. One of the issues related to happiness is a support network, because Myers and Diaz, say when people are asked who is happy. In response, they refer to a supportive network of relationships in a culture which ends to a positive and optimistic interpretation from everyday life. (Matin, 2011)

Happiness is a concept that has several major components.

First, emotional part which causes the happy person to be happy and cheerful in terms of mood. Second, the social component which follows expansion of social relations and the third component, which causes a happy person to have a kind of thought and type of data processing specific to himself, and interpret the daily events so that it follows his optimism (Asgari et al., 2011).

¹ D. G. Myers, 2000

Features of happy people

- Confidence and self-esteem: happy people are interested and dependent on themselves.
- Optimism: happy people are optimistic to future events and at the same time they are full of hope.
- Extroversion: happy people are extroverted, sociable, socializing and communicating.
- Personality control: happy people believe that they choose the fate and control and surround on the events as well as their life.
- A sense of humor: happy people have a sense of humor.
- Acceptance of self, others and nature: Happy people see and accept themselves, other people and the outside world as it is, in fact (Zeidi, 2011).

"Social acceptance means that most of people look from others' point of view and act like them to catch up with them. This often prevents others to honestly express their true selves. It also is because the people always remain moderate. In one sense, the term refers to capacity to accept or to act. Some of the contradictions inherent in the term that comes to discuss in today's world are prejudice to groups, racism or sexism. Some believe learning about other races and cultures promotes social acceptance (Keael, 2006).

One of the places where social acceptance is clear and obvious and its prominent role is shown in the social life is inabilities such as defects, injuries and wounds and even acute psychiatric disorders that distinguishes people from others. Despite huge efforts by families, teachers and mental health professionals, a person with a disability in dealing with life has a challenge exponentially, it is social acceptance. Today, a student with a disability in learning, should have the ability to gain acceptance in social structure, which can sometimes be cruel and nasty. As said previously, a person who was of secondary importance in the society mainstream, will be challenged by learning. Entering to global society is a great burden on his shoulders. A person may use tools, techniques and methods to overcome his disability and grow his abilities, but it lacks social charm and approval. Especially those with disabilities, since spend lots of time on teaching, learning techniques or meeting personal needs with tool, often have less time to address their social needs. (Bagheri, 2006)

Research question

Is there a relationship between religious attitude and social acceptance and happiness in graduate students in Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz?

Hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between religious attitude and happiness in postgraduate students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.
2. There is a relationship between social acceptance and happiness in postgraduate students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.
3. There is a multiple relationship between religious attitudes and social acceptance and happiness in postgraduate students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

Research method

Statistical population, statistical sample and sampling methods: The study population consisted of all postgraduate students of Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, who were enrolled in the academic year 2014-15. The sample consists of 370 students of MA students (185 female and 185 male students), from the academic social sciences (162), technical and engineering (105), agriculture (82) and Basic Sciences (21) students. Stratified random sampling was used to select them.

Research Tools:

A. Religious attitude questionnaire

This scale was prepared by Khodayarifard and Qobari Bonab (1995) and included 40 questions on the subject areas of worship, morality, values, the effect of religion on life and human behavior, social issues, ideology and beliefs, science and religion. Scoring is adjusted on Likert method with options strongly agree, somewhat agree, intermediate, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

For scoring scale, any one of the options selected that have been considered positive attitude are given 4 and 5 scores, to options considered as negative attitude 1, 2 and to intermediate options 3 is given. The highest score in this scale is 200 points. The correlation coefficient of score of each material is valid with the total score of the questionnaire at 0.001 level and reliability is 0.93 and 0.92 with Spearman Brown and Guttman methods. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 0.95. (Kazemian, 2009)

In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of religious attitude questionnaire that was 0.89 for all questionnaire which shows the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire.

B. Social acceptance questionnaire

The scale includes 33 questions that are answered as true or false. People who earn between 0 and 8 points, their response do not seek social acceptance and are likely to be rejected. Those obtained between 9 and 19 points have an average social acceptance and their behavior corresponds with the rules and social norms. Those who score between 20 and 33 points indicates that their actual behavior shows high compatibility with the rules and social norms (Rattus, translated by Ganji, 2002). Its reliability factor with rerunning method was higher than 80%. In terms of validity, this test showed a high and acceptable correlation with other psychological tools designed to measure social acceptance (Samari and Faz, 2005, quoted by Bagheri, 2006).

In a research by Bagheri (2006), Cronbach's alpha and split-half were used to calculate coefficients of reliability of social acceptance questionnaire that 0.74 and 0.58 were obtained respectively, which generally indicated it has acceptable reliability coefficients. To determine the validity of Crawne - Marlowe social acceptance questionnaire, test scores are correlated with scores of Rattus self-approval and it is identified that there is a significant positive relationship between the two. (P = 0.0001 and r = 0.52)

In this study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of social acceptance questionnaire that was 0.70 for whole questionnaire, which shows the acceptable reliability coefficients of the questionnaire.

C. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

Happiness assessment questionnaire was developed in 1989 by Argyle and Lou which has 29 items and measures the area of satisfaction, positive mood, health, and self-efficacy. Happiness questionnaire scoring method is that any item of this questionnaire has 4 options. Its options are scored from zero to three, respectively. In this way: zero is given to the option at all and low has one score, average two scores and high three scores and the total scores of 29 items form total score of scale that the maximum score indicates a high level of happiness (Befkham, 2008).

Argyle and Martin (1989, quoted by Karimi, 2002) obtained 0.43 by linking the happiness questionnaire and a ten-point scale. Valiant (1993) obtained 0.64 by linking the questionnaire with a grading scale. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire correlation coefficients is correlated with Brad Burn affection scale, 0.32, with Argyle life satisfaction 0.57, with the Fleming social scale and correlation with Beck Depression Inventory was 0.52 (Nourbala, 1999).

In research by Noorbala (1999), to verify the validity of questionnaire, 10 psychology and psychiatry experts were asked about their opinions that all confirmed the high ability of Oxford questionnaire to measure people's happiness. For calculating the reliability of happiness questionnaire, Bagheri (2006) correlated it with Beck self-concept test and it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between the two (r = 0.52, P <0.0001) Argyle et al. (1992), reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.90 to determine the reliability of the Oxford happiness questionnaire. Farnham and Broing (1997), using Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained 0.87, Noorbala (1999), 0.84 with Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Also using split-half method, 0.92 was obtained using Spearman-Brown method and 0.91 by Gutmann method (Karimi, 2002).

In a research by Bagheri (2006), Cronbach's alpha and split-half were used to calculate the reliability coefficient of Oxford Happiness Questionnaire that 0.92 and 0.89 were obtained respectively, which generally showed satisfactory reliability coefficient.

In this study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of happiness questionnaire that was 0.78 for all questionnaire, which shows the acceptable reliability coefficients of the questionnaire.

Findings

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of religious attitude, social acceptance and happiness of students

Variable	Statistical indices	Mean	SD	Number
	Subjects			
Religious attitude	Total students	88/132	13/23	370
Social acceptance	Total students	44/20	53.3	370
Happiness	Total students	76/95	45/12	370

As can be seen in Table 1, in the religious attitude, mean and standard deviation are 132.88 and 23.13, respectively, for all students and in social acceptance, 20.44 and 3.53 and in happiness variable was 95.76 and 12.45.

Table 2. simple correlation coefficient between criterion variables (happiness) with predictor variables (religious attitudes and social acceptance) students

Criterion variable	Statistical Indicators		Correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (p)	Number of sample (n)
	Predictor variable				
Happiness	Religious attitude		20/0	0001/0	370
	Social acceptance		11/0	037/0	370

Table 2 shows a significant positive relationship between religious attitude and happiness in students. (P = 0.0001 and r = 0.20). So, the first hypothesis is confirmed. That is, by increasing religious attitude, happiness in students increases. Also, a significant positive relationship exists between social acceptance and happiness in students (p = 0.037 and r = 0.11). So, the second hypothesis is confirmed. That is increasing social acceptance of students is associated with an increase in their happiness.

Table 3. Multiple correlation coefficients of predictors (religious attitude and social acceptance) with the happiness of students with simultaneous and stepwise entrance

Method	Predictor variables	R	R ²	F	P=	β	t	P=
"input"	Religious attitude	0.27	0.07	9.72	0.0001	0.15	2.82	0.005
	Social acceptance					0.14	2.84	0.005
"stepwise"	Religious attitude	0.20	0.04	15.12	0.0001	0.20	3.88	0.0001
	Social acceptance	0.23	0.05	10.83	0.0001	0.21	4.13	0.0001
						0.13	2.51	0.012

As shown in Table 3, regression of predicting students' happiness from social acceptance and the religious attitude is significant (P = 0.0001 and F = 9.72). So, the third hypothesis is confirmed. The religious attitude with beta coefficient of 0.15 and social acceptance with beta coefficient of 0.14 can positively and significantly predict students' happiness. Also, the value of R² indicates that 7% of the variance of students' happiness can be explained by the above-mentioned variables. The results of stepwise regression analysis also showed that religious attitude and social acceptance as predictors of happiness in students, respectively.

Discussion and conclusion

Findings of the study on the relationship between religious attitude and happiness, showed that by increasing religious attitude, happiness increases, so the first hypothesis is confirmed and it is aligned and coordinated with the results of research conducted by Samifar and Shakeri Nejad (2014), Kazemian and Mehrabi Zadeh (2009), Asgari et al., (2011), Alizadeh et al. (2012), Maltabi et al. (1999), Francis et al., (2000), Abdul Khaleq and Nasour (2007), Libo Mirsky (2007).

In the study by Asgari et al., (2011), by examining the relationship between religious beliefs and happiness and impunity in students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, the results showed that a significant positive relationship exists between religious beliefs and impunity, as well as between happiness and impunity.

In research by Amirian (2011), by examining the simple and multivariate relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health and happiness in students of martyr Bahonar University, the results showed that a positive significant relationship exists between spiritual intelligence, mental health and happiness.

In research by Sima Alizadeh et al., (2012) entitled "the relationship between religious attitude and happiness and mental health of male and female students of Educational Sciences, Payam Noor University of Urmia, the results showed that a significant positive relationship exists between religious attitude and happiness of students of this University at P = 0.05/0. Also, a significant positive relationship was observed between religious attitude and mental health.

Samifar and Shakeri Nejad (2014) in a study on the relationship between social, cultural and religious attitude and happiness among students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz obtained the results that by increasing happiness, social and cultural attitude is enhanced and by enhancing religious attitude of students, happiness will also be increased.

Libomirsky (2007) in the results of studies showed that happy people in general are more successful in many areas of life and communication than those with less happiness or unhappy.

On the second hypothesis, people with social support and social acceptance have higher happiness, and the more the social acceptance of students, their confidence and joy will increase.

The higher one's social acceptance, his happiness will increase. The results of this study are consistent with the results of research conducted by Naderi et al. (2007), Keys (2005), Dana, Javan and Holmes (2006) quoted by Pirzaman (2010), Sharafuddin (2010), Zargar Shirazi (2011) Crozier Walden (2005).

Hamid Moradi in a study entitled "Assessment of the relationship between social acceptance and inner and outer religious orientation with the life quality in male and female students of Azad University of Qom" (2011) showed that there is a relationship between the inner religious orientation and social acceptance and there is a positive correlation between quality of life and social acceptance.

Zargar Shirazi and Seraj, (2011) in a research entitled "relationship between self-efficacy and social acceptance with social anxiety in female students" (2011) showed that a significant relationship exists between self-efficacy and social acceptance and social anxiety of female students and social acceptance is a weaker predictor than self-efficacy for social anxiety.

Dana, Javan, Wood and Holmes (2006), in a study examined self-esteem and importance of social acceptance for social decision making. Researchers have assumed that people with high self-esteem don't decide based on their acceptance imposed by the society and are eager to join the group. While, people with low self-esteem were only willing to accompany the group if group acceptance is guaranteed. The study showed that acceptance of others has no impact on decision making of people with high self-esteem. (Quoted by Pirzamani, 2010)

Crozier and Alden (2005) in a study to "examine the relationship between social acceptance and social anxiety in children" found that children with social anxiety give answers with social acceptance in response to assignments and measurements.

In terms of Keys (2005), elements of acceptance and value of person are considered as a social partner and believe in the positive developments in community causes happiness and well-being of the person and is the predictor of mental health (Quoted by Sharafuddin, 2010)

Today, psychologists on optimism have found that prayer and a strong faith removes anxiety, worry and frustration and fear and results in happiness and religion has a preventive role and is an important source for the prevention of mental illnesses including anxiety, stress, and depression (Kazemian et al., 2009), and this factor may increase the happiness of people. William James says faith and religiosity without doubt is the most effective treatment for anxiety and discomfort. A force should be there to help human in life, he believes that the power, religion gives the man in tolerating sufferings, never is possible by ethics. If someone has religious sentiment, an increasing force will be imposed on his life and work and survive excitement and passion of life. So, as a result, religious feelings prevent human to be frustrated in life stages and always passion for life is sable in him and results in happiness in human. Having spiritual goals, life purposefulness and love in God are the main ways to achieve happiness.

Because, a need and desire to be approved is a common principle among all human beings and all human beings confirmed it and love being accepted by others, therefore they try achieve it (Moradi, 2011).

Studies showed that people with high social acceptance and support and less interpersonal conflict, stand more in the face of stressful life events and cope effectively with it that and show fewer signs of depression or psychological turmoil. As a result, this communication can cause an increase in people happiness and joy.

For students, acceptance is important and to be accepted, they must provide appropriate responses. Increasing social acceptance can reduce fear of negative evaluation and poor social performance in people with high anxiety and thus results in satisfaction and means that individual happiness is enhanced.

Researchers found that love is a great source of joy and pleasure and it affects social relationships and happiness. Extroverted people are happy and their happiness is because they have high social skills and real social activity. The main reason for satisfaction of leisure and recreation is joy of social relations that puts them in a good mood, and therefore they seek more social activities. The close association between happiness and communication may be due to the satisfaction of social needs, meeting needs related to self-esteem by recalling the close relationships in childhood (Rezapour, 2013).

Two factors of communication with others and activity always result in happiness. Also participating in entertainment and group activities increase the chances of finding a lasting friendly relationships that it has the property of boosting, both to participate in the leisure and inclination to happiness. In research done on the happiness, it is expressed that happiness is related to self-esteem, loving relationship, extroversion, good health, life satisfaction and challenging work, having exciting goals and various interests, social status of people, having a sense of control over oneself and their optimistic views, being useful for others and trying to do new and fun things. The most fun activities that cause happiness are those which are more social. Attendance at religious ceremonies that are held collectively promote social relationships and perception of religious people increases social support which in turn, increases happiness and thus reduces depression and anxiety.

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