

Affecting Factor on Religion and Happiness in Medical Students, Jahrom, Iran, 2014

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ABSTRACT: Religious attitudes have a significant impact on the psychological aspects of human life. One of the most important aspects of psychological life is happiness. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between religion and happiness in medical students. This descriptive and analytical study was done on 143 medical students in Jahrom University of medical sciences, Jahrom, Iran, 2014. The data were collected by the Oxford Happiness questionnaire and religious attitude questionnaire and obtained data were analyzed by correlation, X^2 and Fisher's tests. According to the X^2 test, there was no significant association between happiness and religion with gender ($P=0.148$, $P=0.957$) and also with regard to Pearson correlation, there was a significant relationship between happiness and religion ($p\leq 0.001$). The results indicate that religion and happiness are associated significantly.

Keywords: happiness, religion, medical students.

INTRODUCTION

Everybody has a deep religious feeling in her/his unconscious. Archeological and anthropological studies have shown that religion has a long history and has been an integral part of human life at all ages (Kortt et al., 2015). Attitudes and religious beliefs have a significant effect on people's life. Hoping to God in trouble, take advantage of the social and spiritual support and also a sense of belonging to a prominent source include the ways that help religious people in a disaster situations (Fidrmuc and Tunali, 2015; Kortt et al., 2015).

Religious psychology is the study of religion and religious phenomena using concepts of psychology. Based on religious psychology, the facts of religion and psychology have effect on each other. In the field of religious psychology, theoretical perspectives are supported by empirical research (Abdel-Khalek, 2015).

Happiness is one of the positive emotions for everybody, which has effect on the human views, feelings and behavior. The concept of happiness in the Quran and Hadith with different words like joy and gladness was used. Happiness is the meaning of human gratification and satisfaction of the existing situation (Ahuvia et al., 2015). Temperament, personality, culture, religion and religious attitudes, social skills, the level of optimism and pessimism and also vitality and social support have effects on happiness (Ellis, 1996; Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012; Mahmud and Sawada, 2015; Tramontano, 2015).

There are two main views on happiness: Hedonism view; based on it, living creations are motivated to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Happiness is the highest level of positive affect (Ellis, 1996). Psychological view; based on it religion and religious beliefs has many utilities and benefits for people. Among the new disciplines, psychology is unique to reveal amazing secrets in the world life (Corsini et al., 1996). Religious direction and having the idea that there is a real destination in the world, can improve people's happiness (Diener et al., 1995; Lucas et al., 1996; Smith and Murphy, 2015).

A significant positive relationship between religious attitude and happiness was documented and also there is a significant positive relationship between the religious happiness and psychological happiness (Djankov et al., 2015), but there is a negative correlation between religious happiness and depression (Abdel-Khalek, 2007; Baumgardner and Crothers, 2009; Bixter, 2015). In a study, religious commitment, as a predictor of happiness has been introduced (Byrd et al., 2000; Abdel-Khalek, 2015; Mousavi et al., 2015).

Considering the significant role of religion in human life and its relationship with happiness, this study was done to investigate the relationship between religiosity and happiness. This is the first study on the association of religion and happiness in medical students in south of Iran.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was carried out on 143 medical students in Jahrom university of medical sciences, Jahrom, Iran, 2014. All medical students which were in clinical steps in Jahrom university of medical sciences were enrolled in this study.

Evaluation tools in this study consisted of three information questionnaire: Religious attitudes, happiness and demographic questionnaires. Demographic information included age, sex, marital status, residence status (dormitory or non- dormitory residency).

Religious attitudes questionnaire compiled 40 questions with five options, which include the worldview and ideology of faith that was measured by grading method known as Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) scored (Khodayarifard et al., 2000). Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, which has 29 items, which were prepared by Argyle and colleague validity and reliability of the questionnaire (Argyle et al., 1989; Bayani, 2008), was used to evaluate happiness in the subjects. Obtained data were analyzed by correlation, X2 and Fisher's tests using SPSS software. P value less than 0.05 was consider significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this study of 143 participants with demographic data which are shown in table 1 were enrolled in this study.

Table 1. Demographic data of participants

	Age (year) Mean±SD	Male percent	Married percent	Dormitory residence percent
Participants	24.28 ± 1.12	39.16	23.08	78.32

The mean happiness and score of religiosity in males and females was not significant (table 2).

Table 2. mean happiness and score of religiosity in male and female participants

		Happiness mean	Religiosity score
Gender	Male	80.90 ± 17.73	132.42 ± 16.14
	Female	76.43 ± 18.32	132.26 ± 18.66
P value		0.148	0.957

Chi-square test results showed that the relationship between religion and also happiness and residence type (type-campus and off-campus housing) were not significant (P= 0.648, P= 0.057).

The relationship between religiosity and marital status, (p = 0.723) and between happiness and marital status, (p = 0.436) achieved a no significant relationship. But a significant relationship between happiness and religiousness score using Pearson correlation was found (r = 0.329 and P≤0.001).

Discussion

The results of present study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and happiness; in the other word religious individuals are generally happier than non-religious ones, which is parallel with previous study (Abdel-Khalek, 2015; Allen, 2015; Fidrmuc and Tunalı, 2015; Mousavi et al., 2015).

There were not significant association between residence location and religiosity and with happiness. Also there were not significant associations between gender and religiosity and with happiness. The findings of present research are consistent with previous studies results (Alavi, 2007; Mahoney et al., 2008; Wilmoth et al., 2015).

Previous research showed that there is a significant positive correlation between religiosity and happiness. Another study suggests that there is a significant relationship between religious beliefs and happiness (Mahoney et al., 2008). The researchers showed religious knowledge, religious behavior and religious attitude and happiness are positively related to each other (Alavi, 2007). The results of present study do not agree with two other studies, which have not reached such a relationship (Heisel and Faulkner, 1982; Abdel-Khalek, 2006).

In present study, there was not significant relationship between marital status with religion and happiness, which is consistent with the results of previous study (Wilmoth et al., 2015).

According to the results of present study, it seems that religious orientation can lead to feelings of happiness which is in agreement with previous study (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2014; Stack, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study, highlights the role of religion in happiness, and also gender, marital status and residence location independent positive significant association of religion with happiness. Therefore, mental health providers are recommended to consider these factors and the interference of these factors to raise happiness in students.

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