



Examining the Relationship between Depression, Anxiety and Religious Orientation in Kashmir University Students, India

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Available online at: www.isca.in

Received 2nd January 2015, revised 3rd March 2015, accepted 5th May 2015

Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim to examine the relationship between depression, anxiety and religious orientation among Kashmir University Students and to find out the significant differences in these variables with respect to gender. 200 students studying in various departments of Kashmir University completed the Becks Depression Inventory (Beck, 1960), Becks Anxiety Inventory (Beck, Epstein, Brown, Aaron, Steer, 1988) and Age Universal Scale of Religious Orientation (Gorusch and Vanable, 1983). Results of the study revealed a significant negative correlation of anxiety and depression with intrinsic religious orientation whereas with respect to extrinsic orientation no significant correlations were found. No significant differences were found in anxiety and depression as far as gender is concerned. However with respect to religious orientation males were found to be more extrinsically oriented and females were found to be more intrinsically oriented.

Keywords: Depression, anxiety, religious orientation.

Introduction

Mankind has long been interested in the role that religion plays in the understanding and response to life events and how this expresses itself in everyday psychological adjustment. Some psychologists¹ see religion as a basis of meaning and constancy in an uncertain world and contributing to positive psychological health. There has been interest in studying the role of religious beliefs in psychological well-being. An important contribution made by researchers within the psychology of health, is the significant relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being. The practice of religion has a significant effect on happiness and an overall sense of personal well-being.

Researchers have validated that individuals differ in their religious orientation and that these differences are related to variations in personality, happiness, religious experience and religious and nonreligious attitudes². Gorsuch has reasoned that one area of research that has given an understanding into the relationship between religion and mental health is the distinction of individuals who exhibit intrinsic and extrinsic orientation towards religion³. Gorsuch again argued that this difference between two different orientations to religion has been most valuable to research on relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being. Individuals having an intrinsic orientation to religion have been described as living their religious beliefs, the influence of which is evident in every aspect of life⁴. On the other hand, those who demonstrate an extrinsic orientation to religion have been described as using religion to provide participation in powerful in-group⁵;

protection, consolation, and social status²; religious participation⁶; an ego defense⁷.

Generally, studies are steady in finding a significant negative correlation between intrinsic orientation and anxiety and a significant positive correlation between extrinsic orientation and anxiety⁸. However, research is less consistent when religious orientation has been related to measures of depression and self-esteem, showing an intrinsic orientation to religion to be associated with lower scores on depression measures^{9,10,11,12} and an extrinsic orientation towards religion associated with higher scores on depression measures¹³. However, inconsistent with this argument are the studies which have intrinsic religious orientation positively correlated with depression, or no significant relationship between either one or both of the religious orientations and depression⁸. In order to study the correlation between religious orientation, anxiety and depression of the students of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences researchers conducted a cross-sectional research. The research results showed that the mean scores of anxiety and depression in female students were higher but in the religious orientation there was no difference between males and females¹⁴. The present study was carried out with the aim of finding the relationship of religious orientation (Intrinsic and extrinsic) with depression and anxiety and to find out the significant differences in depression, anxiety and religious orientation (Intrinsic and extrinsic) with respect to gender.

Objectives: To study differences in depression with respect to gender. To study differences in anxiety with respect to gender. To study differences in religious orientation with respect to gender. To study relationship between intrinsic religious

orientation and depression in Kashmir university students. To study relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and depression in Kashmir university students. To study relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and anxiety in Kashmir university students. To study relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and anxiety in Kashmir university students.

Hypotheses: H₀₁ There is no significant difference in depression among university students as far as their gender is concerned. H₀₂ There is no significant difference in anxiety among university students as far as their gender is concerned. H₀₃ There is no significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation among university students as far as their gender is concerned. H₀₄ There is no significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation among university students as far as their gender is concerned. H₀₅ There is no significant correlation between depression and intrinsic religious orientation. H₀₆ There is no significant correlation between depression and extrinsic religious orientation. H₀₇ There is no significant correlation between anxiety and intrinsic religious orientation. H₀₈ There is no significant correlation between depression and extrinsic religious orientation.

Methodology

Sample: The sample of the present study consisted of 200 students (101 males and 99 females) from various departments of Kashmir University. Ages of the participants ranged from 20-28 years.

Tools used: Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI-II, 1969) (Aaron Beck)¹⁵: This inventory is a series of 21 self-report statements developed to measure the intensity, severity and depth of depression. It is composed of 21 self-report statements; each designed to assess a specific symptom common among people with depression. The coefficient alpha for BDI-II has been reported to be 0.92.

Beck’s Anxiety Inventory (BAI-II, 1969) (Aaron Beck)¹⁶: The BAI consists of twenty-one questions about how the subject has been feeling in the last week, expressed as common symptoms of anxiety (such as numbness and tingling, sweating not due to heat, and fear of the worst happening). It is designed for an age range of 17–80 years old. The BAI is psychometrically sound. Internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) ranges from .92 to .94 for adults and test-retest (one week interval) reliability is .75.

Religious Orientation Scale (Gorsuch and Vanable, 1983)¹⁷: Also known as Age Universal Scale of Religious Orientation, this scale consists of 20 items, 8 of which are meant to characterize a person as intrinsic and rest of the 12 items characterize a person on extrinsic orientation. Each item is scored on a 3-point scale with scores ranging from 1-3.

Statistical Analysis: To find the significant differences, t-test was used. Pearson’s product moment correlation was used to find correlations.

Procedure: The students from different departments were approached followed by rapport making. Assurances of confidentiality were given to boost motivation. A set of questionnaires consisting of Mental Health Inventory and Emotional Intelligence Inventory were given to each. The students were instructed to fill the questionnaires one by one without time limit. Besides general test instructions specific instructions were provided with the individual questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

Result and Interpretation: The present study aimed at studying the difference in male and female Kashmir university students with regard to depression and religious orientation and to find out the correlation between depression, anxiety and religious orientation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic).

Table 1
Comparison of mean scores of Depression with respect to gender

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Df	T
Depression	Male	101	17.77	9.85	198	1.52 ^{NS}
	Female	99	15.67	9.74		

NS: Not Significant.

Table-1 reveals that there is no significant difference in depression among male and female university students (t=1.52). Therefore our null hypothesis, H₀₁ “There is no significant difference in depression among university students as far as their gender is concerned” stands accepted.

Table-2
Comparison of mean scores of Anxiety with respect to gender:

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Df	T
Anxiety	Male	101	18.44	9.85	198	0.33 ^{NS}
	Female	99	18.94	9.73		

NS: Not Significant.

Table-2 reveals that there is no significant difference in anxiety among male and female university students (t=0.33). Therefore our null hypothesis, H₀₂ “There is no significant difference in anxiety among university students as far as their gender is concerned” stands accepted.

Table-3
Comparison of mean scores of Intrinsic Religious Orientation with respect to gender

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Df	T
Intrinsic religious orientation	Male	101	20.26	2.75	198	2.00*
	Female	99	20.95	2.12		

*p<0.05 level of significance

Table 3 reveals that there is a significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation among male and female university students ($t=2.00$). Females ($m=20.95$) are found to be more intrinsically oriented than males ($m=20.26$). Therefore our null hypothesis, H_{03} "There is no significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation among university students as far as their gender is concerned" stands rejected.

Table-4
Comparison of mean scores of Extrinsic Religious Orientation with respect to gender

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Df	T
Extrinsic religious orientation	Male	101	24.29	3.91	198	2.36*
	Female	99	23.01	3.74		

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation among male and female university students ($t=2.36$). Males ($m=24.29$) are found to be more extrinsically oriented than females ($m=23.01$). Therefore our null hypothesis, H_{04} "There is no significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation among university students as far as their gender is concerned" stands rejected.

Table-5
Correlation between Depression and Religious Orientation

Variables	Depression
Intrinsic Religious orientation	$r = -0.228^*$
Extrinsic Religious Orientation	$r = 0.130^{NS}$

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance, NS: Insignificant.

Table 5 shows the correlation of religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) with depression. It is evident from the table that there is a significant negative correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and depression. Thus our null hypothesis H_{05} , "There is no significant correlation between depression and intrinsic religious orientation" stands rejected. It is further evident from the table there is no significant correlation between depression and extrinsic religious orientation. Therefore our null hypothesis, H_{06} , "There is no significant correlation between depression and extrinsic religious orientation" stands accepted.

Table-6
Correlation between Anxiety and Religious Orientation

Variables	Anxiety
Intrinsic Religious orientation	$r = -0.179^*$
Extrinsic Religious Orientation	$r = 0.089^{NS}$

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance, NS: Insignificant.

Table 6 shows the correlation of religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) with depression. It is evident from the table that there is a significant negative correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and depression. Thus our null hypothesis H_{07} , "There is no significant correlation between anxiety and

intrinsic religious orientation" stands rejected. It is further evident from the table there is no significant correlation between depression and extrinsic religious orientation. Therefore our null hypothesis, H_{08} , "There is no significant correlation between anxiety and extrinsic religious orientation" stands accepted.

Discussion: The present research endeavour was conducted with the aim of studying the relationship between depression, anxiety and religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and to find out the significant differences in in these variables with respect to gender. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation of participants as far as their gender is concerned. Further significant negative correlation was found between depression and intrinsic religious orientation and anxiety was also negatively correlated with intrinsic orientation. This result is in line with the study where it was found that people high on intrinsic orientation were least depressed¹⁸. One explanation of these findings might be that some religions like Islam appreciate the intrinsic religious orientation. In addition, extrinsic religiosity is considered as a sign of hypocrisy in some religious teachings. Therefore, these results are consistent with some previous findings, which indicate that religion has important role to enhance psychological wellbeing and to reduce psychological distress¹⁹.

Conclusion

In conclusion the findings of the study indicate that intrinsic religious orientation was negatively correlated with anxiety and depression. The findings also reveal that male and female participants differed with respect to their religious orientation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic). No significant difference was found in anxiety and depression with respect to gender.

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