

The relationship between happiness and attachment with God and the perceived stress in the students of Payam-e Nour University, Sarableh

By

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Abstract

This research was done to investigate the relationship between happiness and attachment with God and the perceived stress. The statistical society included the students of Payam-e Nour University of Sarableh in academic year of 2013-2014. 250 students were selected through random cluster sampling. To collect data, the happiness questionnaire of Oxford, Beck and Mc Donald attachment with God questionnaire. And the Kohen's Questionnaire of the perceived stress were used. The results were analyzed by correlation coefficient tests and regression. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between happiness and the perceived stress, that is, happiness can negatively predict the perceived stress ($P = 0.001$). In addition, Attachment with God had a significant relationship with perceived stress and can negatively predict it ($p = 0.001$). According to the findings of the research, happiness and attachment with God have a noticeable affect on decreasing perceived stress, that is, with the promotion of happiness and attachment with God in students, their perceived stress can be decreased.

Keywords: *Happiness, attachment with God, perceived stress*

1. Introduction

Today, stress has changed into the old part of our dictionary and our every day life. More than 50 years ago, this term was used by Selye in early 1930s. It is a bio-psychology model which indicates to the being's inability to correctly respond psychological, emotional, and physical needs (Selye, 1982). Intensity of this response (stress) varies according to the level in which the situation is perceived as stress (Kononovas & Dallas, 2009 in Pasha and Bozorgian, 2011). Perceived stress is a psychological state in which the individual thinks that his/her mental or physical health in danger. In fact, the creation of stress depends on the individual conception of the events and situations. One situation may be safe for one and, at the same time, be threatening for another one (Klark, 2010).

The investigation done in various cultures and religions, Show the positive effects of spirituality on happiness, stress and physical tension reduction, its influence of psychotherapy and reinforcing the process of therapy (Carlson, Bakasta and Simon, 1998). A great deal of research have proved that being religious and religious factors have a noticeable effect on increasing the level of physical and mental health, curing physical and mental disorders, making individuals resistant to stress, anxiety, creating hope, calmness and happiness. Of the influences of being religious we can name physical and mental health. Research evidences show that the individuals who have the feeling of dependence and have a transcendental relation and enjoy obeying God in their lives, have a better mental and physical health (Fouli, 1988). Attachment with God enhances happiness through stress reduction and enhancing the strategies against stress. It also gives meaning to one's life (Heydari & Enayati, 2010).

Happiness as one the existing variables in positive psychology is the amount of the positive evaluations of an individual of one self (Veenhoven, 1997). These construct has two aspects: The first aspect is an affective factor representing happiness, emotional experience, satisfaction and the other positive emotions; the other is the cognitive evaluation of the satisfaction with various domains of life which

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represent happiness and mental health (Andrews & Mc Kanell, 1980). In addition, Diener (1997) sees happiness as the evaluation of an individual of him/her self and the state like life satisfaction, positive emotions and behaviors reduce anxiety and stress. Although happiness is not equal to the absence of stress, but is indicative of some positive cognitive and emotional states (Diener, 1990), the happy person is always calm: due to constant and perfect satisfies them appropriately (Ahmadi and Haratyan, 1990). Lybmirsly and colleagues (2005) believe that in general, happy individuals respond to the events and conditions in a more adjective manner and possess a lower level of stress and a stronger and more creative security system than unhappy ones. Sediqi-e- Arfa'e, Tamana'e Far and Abedin- Abadi (2012), in their research, concluded that religious orientation and happiness have a direct relationship with the style of stress confrontation.

Gallup (1984) showed that religion individuals evaluate themselves as relatively very happy persons. Spilka and colleagues (2003), using a great deal of researches, proved the positive effect of religion on mental health and behavior.

Ali-Mohammadi and Azarbaijani (2009) in their research on the investigation of the relationship of Islamic happiness with psychological happiness concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between both of them.

Sawlati and colleagues (2001) investigated the relationship of religious view, confrontational responses and mental health in the students. The results showed that there is a relationship between religious attitudes and mental health and between religious attitudes and confrontational responses. 65% of individuals used religious and 35% used unreligious techniques to confront stress. Zohar & Marshal (2000) believe that spiritual experiences create a deep in sight which opens new windows and landscapes to life. This new insight and landscape enables one to perform the tasks efficiency and find creative solutions for the problems of life.

According to the above results, this research has been done to investigate the relationship of happiness and attachment with God and perceived stress.

2. Method

Research method, statistical society and sample: This is a correlative research in which the relationship between happiness and attachment with God and perceived stress has been investigated. The universe of the research includes BA students of Sarableh Payam-e Nour University in academic year of 92-93. The sample includes 250 students (boys and girls) who were selected through multistage cluster random sampling using the following procedures: at first 5 experimental groups were selected randomly from among all departments of each department 2 newly entered groups were selected and from among each of these groups 30 students were selected randomly.

Tools

Oxford happiness inventory: This was designed by Arjail and colleagues in 1989 having 29 items. Each item has four choices which have been scored from 0 to 3. The additive of scores for 29 item composes the total score of the scale. Total score of the test ranges from 0 to 87. In Iran, This questionnaire has been translated by Ali pour and Nourballa (1999) and the validity of the translation has been supported by 8 experts. The face validity of the questionnaire has been has been tasted by 110 BA students of Allame Tabatab'e and the control group from Tehran University. The Cronbach α was 98% and through bisection it was 92%. The reliability was obtained through retesting which was 79% after 3 weeks. In Iran Sabeti and Lotfi Kashani (2010) evaluated it on 500 student in Azad University of Roudehen α coefficient for 29 questions was 0.90 and the reliability coefficient by Cronbach α was 0.88 for the boys and 0.91 for the girls. The validity of the questionnaire by construct validity with Beck anxiety test was – 0.90.

The scale of attachment with God by Beck and Mc Donald (2004): this is 28-item scale which was designed by Beck and Mc Donald. It evaluates two dimensions of attachment with God, which is, refraining from being friendly with God and the threat of being rejected. They (2006) determined the reliability coefficient of 14 items dealing with stress, at 0.82 by Cronbach α and 14 items relating refraining at 0.83. Zahedi Babelan, Reza'e and Harafati (2012) determined the reliability coefficient by Cronbach Method at 0.85.

Kohn's scale of perceived stress; this included 14 expressions which investigated the thoughts and emotions of individuals during the last month. In this research the 14-item version was used. The coefficients of internal concurrent validity by Cronbach method ranged from 0.8 to 0.86. Generally the criteria for the reliability of this scale is not affected by age and gender (Kohn et.al, 1983). In their research Mimmura & Griffiths (2004) determined the coefficient for Cronbach α at 0.81 to 0.88. Dehqani (1993) determined Cronbach α coefficient of this scale more than 0.90. Pour Shahbazi (1995) reported 0.73 as the reliability coefficient of this scale (Abolqasemi and Narimani, 2005).

3. Findings

Table 1 shows the indices of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients) for the whole sample according to the scores of happiness, attachment with God and perceived stress

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variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3
Perceived stress	250	42.83	8.96	1		
happiness	250	45.21	15.91	** -0.37	1	
Attachment with God	250	43.70	12.1	** 0.37	** 0.70	1

** = $p < 0.001$

In order to investigate the relationship between happiness, attachment with God and perceived stress in participants in the research, the matrix of correlation was used. According to table 1, a significant relationship exists between all of the variables which shows that an internal consistency exists between variables.

Table 2: The results of multi-variation regression analysis of happiness and attachment with God and perceived stress through step-by-step

step	Predictor variable	R	R ²	B	Beta	T	P
First step	Attachment with God	0.38	0.14	-0.28	0.38	-6.40	0.001
Second step	Attachment with god	0.41	0.17	-0.17	-0.23	-2.81	0.05
	happiness			-0.12	-0.21	-2.60	0.01

In the first step, attachment with God ($R^2 = 0.14$) can 14% predict the variance of perceived stress ($P < 0.001$); in the second step, Tolerance ($R^2 = 0.17$) can 17% predict the variance of perceived stress ($P < 0.001$).

As there is a significant positive relationship between predictor variables (happiness and attachment with God) and criterion variable (perceived stress), regression can be used for prediction.

To investigate the predictive role of happiness and attachment with God in perceived stress, Multi-variation step by step regression was used. As it can be seen in table 3, the results of regression show that happiness and attachment with God have a relationship with mental perceived stress.

4. Conclusion

The results showed that happiness have a significant relationship with perceived stress, that is, happiness can negatively predict perceived stress. So, happiness can reduce the student's stress. Moreover, attachment with God has a significant relationship with perceived stress. By attachment with God, we can negatively predict perceived stress, that is to say, the more attachment with God, the more perceived stress reduction in students. The results of this research are consistent other researches done on this field (Gallup, 1984; Zohar & Marshal, 2000, Spilk et.al. 2003; Lybmirsky, et.al, 2005; Sawlati, et.al. 2001; Ali Mohammadi & Azerbajani, 2009; sediqi-e Arfa'e, Tamana'e Far & Abedini, 2012).

According to these researches positive thoughts act like a shield as to the tension and a negative relationship exist between psychological symptoms, psychoneurosis and happiness. Jones believes that happiness is the same as mental health. Happiness equals negative emotion minus positive emotions. When positive emotions are high, the individual enjoys happiness. Happiness is related to the individual's thoughts and emotions and every individual can shape and reinforce his/her own happiness.

Believing in God empowers one to remove the backgrounds of stress and anxiety. These individuals have stronger religious views and beliefs and have a real trust in God and their own believing power and have deeper and more internalized religious beliefs. For these people, religion has a cognitive, evaluative-dramatic function. As using problem-centered method requires using cognitive abilities to gather data and organizing the data for problem solving, religion-oriented individual shower greater tendency to use this method.

To explain findings, it can be said that " as McIntosh and colleagues 1993 indicates, religious bases which helps them process the data cognitively. According to this theory; it can be said that psychological religious foundations can influence our evaluation of stressful events. So, they can influence our evaluation of the events, manners of confrontation, and even the happening manner of events. Religious individuals, who have internal religious orientations, have the bases which influence their evaluation of stressful events. These individuals usually use problem-center confrontation strategies. Thus, they show better adjustment in different situations. In fact, being religious can reduce the consequences of sever junctures of life. Religion has a positive effect on mental health, especially mental health of those having internalized religious tendencies, while those having external orientations make no profit, but due to transient beliefs and instrumental view as to religion Suffer from unwanted consequences. For example, internal religious orientation has an average relationship with stress reduction, increasing mental health, self-esteem and tolerance, while external religious orientation has a positive relationship with depression and a negative one with self-respect and responsibility.

One of the limitations of this study was that the manner of data collection was through questionnaire. Although this is frequent in most researches, it is suggested that the data for each of the variables be collected through several method so that the results may be more prone to generalization.

According to the findings of this research, equipping students with strategies for more attachment with God, holding instruction workshops on managing stress, teaching confrontation skills, increasing happiness through creating successful experiences and so on are some suggestions of this research

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