

## **A Study of Religious Orientation and Life Satisfaction among University Students**

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**Abstract:** *The present study was an attempt to assess religious orientation and life satisfaction as well as to find out relationship of religious orientation with life satisfaction among university students. University students were also compared on religious orientation and life satisfaction with respect to their gender. The data for the present study was obtained from university students [N=200 (Males 110 & Females 90)] belonging to various departments of university of Kashmir. The data collected was analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques like Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test. The results showed significant positive correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction. Moreover, a significant negative correlation was found between extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction. Significant difference was also found among university students on extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction with respect to their gender. However, no significant difference was found among university students on intrinsic religious orientation with respect to their gender.*

**Keywords:** *Intrinsic religious orientation, extrinsic Religious orientation, life satisfaction, University students, gender.*

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### **Introduction**

Religion is as old as man himself. There is no evidence of era or period of human race without the association of religion. It has played a major role in the birth and development of civilizations, thus becoming an integral part of our living. It has often been a variable of interest to researchers who wish to describe and understand the experience of college students. Religious beliefs are of effective factors in personal growth and it can be said that religious is a factor for keeping and improving mental and physical health. Religious beliefs play great role in increasing individual tolerance while facing mental problems. Religion as a collection of beliefs, generalized and private values is one of the most effective mental supports and is able to revitalize and rescue aimless life of the person (Motamedi, Ajeyi, Azad Falah, & Kiamanesh, 2005). Jonson (2004) and McNulty, et al. (2004) showed that religion had considerable effect on individual adjustment and it can be used to cure people interested in spiritual mental therapy. Young et al. (2004) found that religion is a supportive force to reduce mental pressures and criminal temptation and also increase life satisfaction. The concept of religious orientation first conceived by Allport (1963; Allport & Ross, 1967) and developed by numerous others (Feagin, 1964; Hood, 1970; King & Hunt, 1969) offered a relevant framework for understanding religion in this way. At first, Allport (1950) called them "immature" and "mature", but later on he used the terms "extrinsic" and "intrinsic", which are the focuses of the current study.

### **The Concept of Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religious Orientation**

Allport proposed two religious orientations --intrinsic and extrinsic (IE). Extrinsic religion was defined as "utilitarian exploitation of religion to provide comfort, status, or needed crutches in one's encounter with life," and intrinsic religion was defined as, "life wholly oriented, integrated, and directed by the master value of religion" (Allport, 1968). Although Allport's definitions were clearly value-laden and reflected a conservative Christian perspective, considerable research has utilized both his concepts and the Religious Orientation Scale (R.O.S.) that he developed to measure it (cf. review by Hunt & King, 1971). In the process, the I-E concepts have been refined and redefined, evolving to a point where a person with an extrinsic orientation may be defined as one who

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"subordinates and tailors religious practices and beliefs to the satisfaction of personal motives," and the person with an intrinsic religious orientation as one who "subordinates and tailors personal motives and practices to the precepts of religion (Dittes, 1971). From Allport's perspective, intrinsic and extrinsic orientations represented different ends of a continuum. Subsequent research particularly that by Feagin (1964), King (1967), Hood (1970), and Thompson (1974), suggested that I-E orientations represented two separate dimensions rather than a continuum.

Empirical research suggests that religiosity is positively associated with life satisfaction, but some inconsistent results are observed. An association between religiosity and life satisfaction was observed in studies of British adolescents (Francis, Jones, & Wilcox, 2000), and of Spanish adolescents (Casas, Figuer, Gonzalez, & Malo, 2007), but not of German adolescents (Francis, Ziebellz, & Lewis, 2003). Furthermore, in a study with a multidominational U.S. sample, no correlation has been observed between life satisfaction and both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (Cohen, Pierce, Chambers, Meade, Gorvine, & Koenig, 2005). Life satisfaction is a broad and complex construct, which encompasses an evaluation of the full range of overall functioning, and an appraisal of one's life in general and in specific domains, such as family, health, social support, and environment (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Huebner, 2004). Many studies have been done on life satisfaction (Diener, 1994; Veenhoven & Ehrhardt, 1995). Researchers have also found that religion and spirituality in many studies are related and interact with well-being and life satisfaction (McFadden, 1995). Religious people have reported higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with life (Poloma & Pendleton, 1990).

O'Neil I (1981) argued that life satisfaction is an important obligation of education. To improve the quality of life, physiological well-being, life satisfaction and personal development of students, academic institutions have made significant progress in creating wellness programs in education (Hermon & Hazler, 1999). Chow (2005) measured life satisfaction among 315 university students and found that 76.2% of the students were satisfied with their lives. In terms of satisfaction with different aspects of life, students were most satisfied with certain aspects of their lives such as relationship with mother, living environment, relationships with close friends, relationships with siblings, and living arrangement. Chow (2005) also found that students who had a higher socio-economic status, obtained higher academic performance and were more satisfied with their academic experience, self-esteem, relationship with significant other, and living conditions, expressed a greater level of satisfaction with life. Yetim (2003) measured life satisfaction in Turkey among 388 students and 308 academics of Mersin University, results showed that individualism, self-esteem and mastery predicted high life satisfaction, and collectivism predicted low life satisfaction. Further he also found that the level of satisfaction with university life significantly contributed to the autonomy and independence of male university students. Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2001) reported that religious beliefs and practices were related to "greater life satisfaction, happiness, positive effect, and morale," as well as hope, optimism, purpose in life, and lower levels of both depression and anxiety. Overall, he also said that positive findings significantly outweighed neutral or negative findings. Nearly 80% of studies that examined the relationship between religious beliefs and practices and "life satisfaction, happiness, positive effect, morale, and other indicators of well-being" reported significant positive correlations for the variables of interest.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the relationship between religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and life satisfaction among the university students.
2. To examine the significance of difference of religious orientation and life satisfaction on the basis of gender among university students.
3. To explore the predictors of life satisfaction among university students.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among the university students.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among the university students.
- **H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation among the university students with respect to their gender.
- **H<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation among the university students with respect to their gender.
- **H<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant difference in life satisfaction among the university students with respect to their gender.

- **H<sub>6</sub>:** Demographic variables (Gender, family type and residential area), intrinsic religious orientation and extrinsic religious orientation will be the predictors of life satisfaction among university students.

## Research Method

### Sample

The sample of the present study consisted of 100 university students who were selected on purposive basis from different departments of university of Kashmir viz., Sociology, Urdu, Economics, Education and English in the academic year 2014-2015. Out of 100 university students 63 were males and 37 were females. This particular sample was also further divided on the basis of family type (nuclear and joint), residential area (rural and urban) Subjects were within the range of 20 to 25 years old.

### Research Design

A research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem. The present correlational study is designed to examine the relationship between religious orientation and life satisfaction among university students.

### Religious Orientation Scale (1983)

The Religious orientation was developed by Gorsuch & Venable, (1983). Otherwise known as Age Universal Scale of Religious Orientation, this scale contains 20 items, 8 of which are meant to characterize a person as intrinsic (5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 19) and rest of the 12 items (1, 2, 3,4, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20) are meant for measuring the extrinsic orientation. The Age Universal Religious Orientation Scale has internal reliability coefficients of .66 (for the extrinsic scale) and .73 (for the intrinsic scale). Besides that, the Age Universal Religious Orientation Scale has good concurrent validity whereby it correlated .79 (for the extrinsic scale) and .90 (for the intrinsic scale) with the Allport-Ross Religious Orientation Scale.

### Satisfaction with Life Scale (1985)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS is a 5-item measure of subjective well-being using a seven-point Likert scale. It is the most widely used measure of life satisfaction to date. Internal reliability of the scale has been estimated to range between .80 to .89, and temporal stability to range from .64 to .84. Correlations between the SWLS and other measures of life satisfaction and subjective well-being range from  $r = .35$  to  $r = .82$  (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

### Procedure for Data Collection

In the present study purposive sampling method was used. The students were approached personally in their departments. Informed consent was taken from them in order to seek their voluntary participation and only those students were included who agreed to take part in this study.

### Statistical Analysis

The information/responses collected from the respondents were subjected to various statistical treatments. The data was analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0). Statistical techniques used for analyzing data were: frequencies, percentages, Pearson product moment correlation coefficients, Hierarchical/ sequential multiple regressions correlation and t-test.

## Research Findings

*Table (1): Showing normality of distribution:*

|                        | <b>Intrinsic</b> | <b>Extrinsic</b> | <b>Total R.O.</b> | <b>Life Satisfaction</b> |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>N</b>               | 100              | 100              | 100               | 100                      |
| Mean                   | 21.58            | 17.89            | 39.47             | 28.01                    |
| Std. Deviation         | 2.221            | 5.259            | 4.990             | 5.568                    |
| Absolute               | .145             | .160             | .126              | .214                     |
| Positive               | .138             | .160             | .126              | .155                     |
| Negative               | -.145            | -.131            | -.077             | -.214                    |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z   | 1.450            | 1.603            | 1.259             | 2.144                    |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .030             | .012             | .084              | .000                     |

Test distribution is normal

Table 1 show that both the tests (religious orientation and life satisfaction) were normally distributed.

**Table (2): Showing Frequency and Percentage of Sample Group With Respect to Intrinsic Religious Orientation**

| Level    | Range | f   | %   |
|----------|-------|-----|-----|
| Low      | 8-12  | 1   | 1   |
| Moderate | 13-20 | 25  | 25  |
| High     | 21-24 | 74  | 74  |
| Total    | -     | 100 | 100 |

Table 2 reveals that out of 100 university students, 1% was found low on intrinsic religious orientation, 25% show moderate level of intrinsic religious orientation and 74% of students were found high on intrinsic religious orientation.

**Table (3): Showing Frequency and Percentage of Sample Group With Respect to Extrinsic Religious Orientation.**

| Level    | Range | f   | %   |
|----------|-------|-----|-----|
| Low      | 12-18 | 61  | 61  |
| Moderate | 19-30 | 21  | 21  |
| High     | 31-36 | 18  | 18  |
| Total    | -     | 100 | 100 |

Table 3 reveals that out of 100 university students, 61% were found low on extrinsic religious orientation, 21% show moderate level of extrinsic religious orientation and 18% of parents were found high on extrinsic religious orientation.

**Table (4): Showing Frequency and Percentage of Sample Group With Respect to Life Satisfaction**

| Level                  | Range | f   | %   |
|------------------------|-------|-----|-----|
| Extremely Satisfied    | 31-35 | 51  | 51  |
| Satisfied              | 26-30 | 18  | 18  |
| Slightly Satisfied     | 21-25 | 16  | 16  |
| Neutral                | 20    | 7   | 7   |
| Slightly Dissatisfied  | 15-19 | 6   | 6   |
| Dissatisfied           | 10-14 | 2   | 2   |
| Extremely Dissatisfied | 5-9   | 0   | 0   |
| Total                  | -     | 100 | 100 |

Table 4 reveals that out of 100 university students 51% were found extremely satisfied with life, 18% satisfied, 16% slightly satisfied, 7% neutral, 6% slightly dissatisfied, 2 % dissatisfied and 0% of students were found extremely dissatisfied with life.

**Table (5): Showing Pearson's Correlation Coefficient(r) Between Religious Orientation and Life Satisfaction of the Sample Group**

| Variable                        | r      | sig          |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| Intrinsic Religious Orientation | .248*  | (p = <0.005) |
| Life Satisfaction               |        |              |
| Extrinsic Religious Orientation | -.614* | (p = <0.001) |
| Life Satisfaction               |        |              |

\*.P<0.005 Level of significance

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant positive correlation ( $r = .248$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) between intrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among university students, indicating “*more the intrinsic religious orientation, more is life satisfaction and vice-versa.*” Thus our null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  which states that, “*There is no significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among the university students.*” stands rejected.

The table further reveals that there is a significant negative correlation between extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction ( $r = -.614$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) among university students indicating that “*more the extrinsic religious orientation, less is the life satisfaction and less the extrinsic religious orientation, more is life satisfaction*” Thus, our null hypothesis  $H_{02}$  which states that, “*There is no significant relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among the university students.*” stands rejected.

**Table (6): Showing Comparison of Mean Scores of Intrinsic Religious Orientation, Extrinsic Religious Orientation, total religious orientation and Life Satisfaction among University Students with Respect to their Gender**

| Variable                        | Gender  | n  | M     | SD   | df | t-value            |
|---------------------------------|---------|----|-------|------|----|--------------------|
| Intrinsic Religious Orientation | Males   | 63 | 21.60 | 2.39 | 98 | .135 <sup>NS</sup> |
|                                 | Females | 37 | 21.54 | 1.52 |    |                    |
| Extrinsic Religious Orientation | Males   | 63 | 16.57 | 4.76 | 98 | 3.44**             |
|                                 | Females | 37 | 20.13 | 5.36 |    |                    |
| Life Satisfaction               | Males   | 63 | 29.33 | 5.18 | 98 | 3.24**             |
|                                 | Females | 37 | 25.73 | 5.54 |    |                    |

\*.P<0.05 Level of significance, \*\*.P<0.01 Level of significance

Table 6 reveals that there is a no significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation between male and female university students ( $t = .135, p=.893$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis  $H_{03}$ , which states that “*There is no significant difference in intrinsic religious orientation among the university students with respect to their gender*”, stands accepted.

Table 6 further reveals that there is a significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among university students ( $t = 3.44, p=.001$  &  $t = 3.24, p=0.002$ ). The results showed that female students have more extrinsic religious orientation and male students are high in life satisfaction. Thus, our null hypotheses  $H_{04}$ , which states that “*There is no significant difference in extrinsic religious orientation among the university students with respect to their gender*”; and  $H_{05}$ , “*There is no significant difference in life satisfaction among the university students with respect to their gender*” stands rejected.

**Table (7): Summary of Hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting life satisfaction among university students**

| Measures       | R   | R <sup>2</sup> | ΔR <sup>2</sup> | F      | β     | t      | Sig.        |
|----------------|-----|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|-------------|
| <b>Model 1</b> |     |                |                 |        |       |        |             |
| Demographics   | .30 | .092           | .06             | 3.239  |       |        |             |
| Gender         |     |                |                 |        | -.009 | -.082  | .935        |
| Residence      |     |                |                 |        | -.253 | -2.314 | <b>.023</b> |
| Family type    |     |                |                 |        | .108  | 1.050  | .296        |
| <b>Model 2</b> |     |                |                 |        |       |        |             |
| Demographics   |     |                |                 |        |       |        |             |
| Gender         |     |                |                 |        | -.027 | -.261  | .794        |
| Residence      |     |                |                 |        | -.256 | -2.411 | <b>.018</b> |
| Family type    |     |                |                 |        | .088  | .876   | .383        |
| Intrinsic      | .39 | .152           | .11             | 4.260  | .247  | 2.596  | <b>.011</b> |
| <b>Model 3</b> |     |                |                 |        |       |        |             |
| Demographics   |     |                |                 |        |       |        |             |
| Gender         |     |                |                 |        | .071  | .829   | .409        |
| Residence      |     |                |                 |        | -.201 | -2.297 | <b>.024</b> |
| Family type    |     |                |                 |        | .094  | 1.146  | .255        |
| Intrinsic      |     |                |                 |        | .047  | .558   | .578        |
| Extrinsic      | .65 | .435           | .405            | 14.456 | -.579 | -6.855 | <b>.000</b> |

The regression equation performed on university students as depicted in the table 5. clearly indicates under first model when demographic variables (Gender, residential area and family type) were entered, the amount of variance accounted by all demographics variables together were found to be as 9.2% on life satisfaction. Out of three demographic variables, only Residence was found as significant predictor life satisfaction among university students. Beta value indicates that ( $\beta = -.253$ ) residence was negatively associated with life satisfaction.

Intrinsic religious orientation was added under second model which accounted statistically significant variance as  $R^2$  15.2% ( $F = 4.260$ ). Residential area was again emerged as strongest predictor ( $\beta = -.256$ ) followed by intrinsic religious orientation ( $\beta = -.247$ ). Residence and intrinsic religious orientation were found negatively associated with life satisfaction. Second dimension of religious orientation (extrinsic religious orientation) was entered in third model with all demographic characteristics and intrinsic religious orientation. Extrinsic religious orientation with intrinsic orientation and demographic variables accounted 43.5% variance ( $F = 14.456$ ) in life satisfaction, under third model extrinsic religious orientation ( $\beta = -.579$ ) was found as strong negative predictor of life

satisfaction followed by residence ( $\beta = -.201$ ). Thus our last null hypotheses “*Demographic variables (Gender, family type and residential area), intrinsic religious orientation and extrinsic religious orientation will be the predictors of life satisfaction among university students*” was accepted.

## Discussion

The aim of the present study was to study the religious orientation and life satisfaction among the university students and relation of religious orientation with life satisfaction. The comparison among university students on religious orientation and life satisfaction with respect to their gender has also been examined. The results of the present study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among university students. Present results may be corroborated with earlier research studies that have shown that intrinsic religious orientation was positively associated with self-regulation, self-esteem, physical and mental health, life satisfaction, and having a purpose in life (Ventis, 1995; Wulff, 1997). Furthermore, studies conducted by Skinner, Correa, Skinner, & Bailey, (2001) and Biesinger, & Arikawa (2008), revealed that intrinsic religious orientation was associated with greater level of happiness and lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress regardless of gender. Moreover, Intrinsic religiousness has been associated with positive work outcomes such as career decision making, self-efficacy, career commitment, career decidedness, work satisfaction, and work meaningfulness (Dik, Duffy & Tix, 2009; Duffy & Blustein, 2005).

The results of the present study showed that there is a significant negative correlation between extrinsic religious orientation and life satisfaction among university students. These results may be supported by some previous findings which indicate positive relationship between intrinsic religiosity and psychological well-being and inverse between extrinsic and psychological well-being (García-Alandete & Bernabé-Valero, 2013; Mela et al., 2008). There is no significant difference among university students on intrinsic religious orientation as far as their gender is concerned. However, significant difference was found among university students on extrinsic religious orientation, total religious orientation and life satisfaction with respect to their gender. Female students were found high on extrinsic religious orientation as compared to male students. These results of present study may be supported by some earlier researchers, that individuals differ in their religious orientation and that these differences are related to variations in personality, happiness, religious experience and religious and nonreligious attitudes (Barrett, Patock-Peckham, Hutchinson, Nagoshi, 2005; Ghavam, Mazidi, Sadati, 2010; Lewis, Maltby, Day, 2005).

As compared to female students, male students were found high on life satisfaction, the result of this study is in line with the study by Nathawat (1996) whose findings showed that males experience more life satisfaction than females. Generally males enjoy more independence and financial security than females.

Present study also explored demographic variable (residential area), intrinsic religious orientation and extrinsic religious orientation were found as significant predictors of life satisfaction among university students. Few previous researchers have also identified a large number of factors influencing life satisfaction such as cultural and religious beliefs or family life (Casas, Figuer, Gonzalez, & Malo, 2007; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). Religious people have reported higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with life (Poloma & Pendelton, 1990).

## Future Research Suggestions

- Research studies on religious orientation in relation to life satisfaction are rather scanty; this area needs further researches and specifically researches in the field of Applied Psychology.
- A number of variables such as anxiety, depression, hopelessness and stress may be linked to religious orientation among university students.
- Further studies should also be explored the positive consequence of religious orientation across the life span.

## Implication

A research that looks specifically at the religious life of college students has been limited. The implications of the present study results for the field of psychology are discussed with particular emphasis on the role of religious orientation on life satisfaction, linking the two construct and arguing that religious orientation could enhance life satisfaction among students.

## Limitations

- In this present study demographic variables like socio-economic status, age, religion, etc. have not been taken into consideration. These variables could have contributed more clear results.

- Students from different departments of university of Kashmir were included in the present study while comparison would have been done with other universities students.

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