

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The current study was conducted to explore the empirical correlation between religious orientation and emotional functioning based on data gathered from 400 adult respondents. The research methodology employed in this study was through cross-sectional correlational research design whereby strategies of systematic exclusion and inclusion were taken into consideration before data collection making use of the standardised psychometric measures. The relationship between religious orientation and emotional functioning was analysed through Pearson product moment correlation and simple linear regression. The results reveal that the correlation between religious orientation and emotional functioning is weak and insignificant with a negative correlation, $r = -0.053$ and $p = 0.292$. Moreover, in the case of linear regression analysis, it was found that religious orientation does not have any significant predictive relationship with emotional functioning as $\beta = -0.053$, $t(398) = -1.056$ and $p = 0.292$. The analysis offers evidence of the lack of relationship between different measures of religious orientation and emotional functioning among respondents belonging to varied backgrounds. Thus, the current study draws attention to the methodological implications arising from the findings of the current research.

Keywords: religious orientation, emotional functioning, psychological well-being, regression analysis, psychometric assessment.

Introduction

Religious beliefs and spirituality have been significant in providing individuals with a unique means of obtaining purpose in life, coping with challenges, and managing emotional reactions (Pargament, 2007; Koenig et al., 2012). Allport and Ross (1967) have created a very important concept of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation within the psychology of religion. Intrinsic religious orientation represents a committed approach, where religion is perceived as an end itself, while extrinsic orientation represents a different approach, where the religion is treated as a tool to achieve some other goals such as social protection or position. This theory has led to comprehensive research studies investigating how various motivations for

religious involvement affect psychological functioning (Batson et al., 1993; Hill & Pargament, 2008). A large number of studies show that religious participation is often correlated with higher levels of psychological well-being and lowered incidences of disorders such as depression, as well as improved coping abilities. For example, Paek (2006) found that self-reported emotional intelligence was positively related to the level of intrinsic religiosity and frequency of church attendance. Liu (2010) showed that intrinsic religiousness had a positive association with emotional intelligence domains, while extrinsic religiosity had a negative relationship. In line with this theory, Łowicki and Zajenkowski (2017) found out that ability-based emotional intelligence correlated positively with general belief in

religion, while extrinsic orientation and negative religious coping were predictors of problems in emotional regulation.

Rationale of the Study

While typical assumptions hold that religiosity always positively influences emotional health, modern psychological works reveal a much more complex reality (Exline, 2013; Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010). Several researchers have noted only weak or culture-specific links between religious constructs and emotional variables (Tajabadi & Asgharnejad Farbod, 2017; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Additionally, modern large-scale reviews (Brandão, 2025) maintain that the effect size between religious dimension and particular emotion-regulating effects is highly variable and unsteady and depends on how the data was collected, the makeup of the sample and whether global aggregates or partial indexes were considered. In light of the discrepancy in opinion within the literature, one can conclude that the need to repeat a rigorous investigation into the correlation between general religiosity and emotional functioning emerges.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To measure the relationship between religious orientation and emotional wellbeing of an adult population.
- To test for the effectiveness of the overall religious orientation as a linear predictor in the emotional function of respondents using the regression technique.

Method

Research Design

A cross-sectional, correlational research design has been employed in this study. The quantitative approach favors the study of relations among psychological variables in a real-world population under no experimental conditions which allows calculating the statistical association and predicting the outcomes at the same point of time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Field, 2018).

Sampling Technique

The study employed the purposive convenience sampling technique to recruit participants from a range of community and educational backgrounds. This sampling technique is appropriate for the collection of a large sample of adults that meet the criteria for final analysis.

Sample Size

Prior to the analysis of the data, a prior statistical power analysis was conducted using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) software to compute the necessary sample size. The study sought to determine the minimum sample size needed to achieve a statistical power of .80 at an alpha level of .05. The results of the analysis indicated that the required sample size for the study would be 385 participants. An increase of 15 participants was added to the final analysis to account for incomplete forms.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure sample homogeneity and data reliability, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed beforehand:

Among inclusion criteria were:

- (a) participants aged 18 years or older;
- (b) English or primary survey language literate and with basic education;
- (c) having provided informed consent.

Exclusion criteria were:

- (a) individuals suffering from diagnosed acute psychiatric disorders, critical cognitive defects, or neurological trauma,
- (b) partial completion of questionnaires (over 10% of such responses).

Measures

Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)

The assessment of individuals' level of religious orientation was carried out using a standard Religious Orientation Scale based on already existed psychometric models (Allport & Ross, 1967). The Urdu translated version of this scale was used in the study by Khan et al. (2016). The scale measures the overall degree of the direction of religious orientation and gives a total score. In this case, the higher the score, the higher the level of religious orientation. The reliability of the scale was confirmed

internal consistency coefficient of alpha scale is very high ($\alpha = .84$).

A. General Emotional Labor Scale-Urdu (GELS-U)

General Emotional Labor Scale- Urdu (GELS-U) (Mohsin & Ayub, 2020). There are thirty items on the General Emotional Labor Scale-Urdu (GELS-U). GELS-U's test-retest reliability is 0.871 and its internal consistency is 0.810. The 5-point Likert scale was used to collect self-report data for the GELS-U. The measuring of the frequency and occurrence of emotional labor was made possible by the five possibilities.

Results

Correlation Analysis

Table -1: Pearson Correlation Between Religious Orientation and Emotional Functioning (N = 400)

Measure	1	2
1. Religious Orientation	—	-.053
2. Emotional Functioning	-.053	—

Note. TotalR = Religious Orientation; TotalE = Emotional Functioning. $p = .292$ (two-tailed).

A bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation was done to study the relationship between religious orientation and emotional functioning in the 400 participants. Results showed the relationship to be weak and non-significant and the value of $r = -0.053$ with $p = 0.292$ (see Table 1). Thus, global religious orientation scores are not related to general emotional functioning in this sample.

Regression Analysis

Table-2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Functioning from Religious Orientation (N=400)

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI [LL, UL]
(Constant)	73.442	12.261	—	5.990	.000	[49.338, 97.543]
Religious Orientation	-.265	.251	-.053	-1.056	.292	[-.758, .228]

Note. $R^2 = .003$, $F(1, 398) = 1.115$, $p = .292$. Dependent Variable: Emotional Functioning.

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to see whether or not religious orientation predicted emotional functioning scores of participants. The regression model was found to be non-significant since religious orientation accounted for a very small portion of the variance of emotional functioning as $R^2 = 0.003$, $F(1,398) = 1.115$, $p = 0.292$. The

Procedure

In terms of procedure, ethical clearance was granted by the Consent from participants to complete the surveys, either in writing or electronically, was obtained in advance. Participants were assured that their responses were confidential and that involvement in the study was totally voluntary; they completed the questionnaires and hence this information was used in data collection. The data gathered was in the form of data packets that were screened for outliers and coding errors before analysis using SPSS version 28.0.

Discussion

In this study, the empirical connection between global religious orientation and emotional functioning was explored among 400 adults. Contrary to research examples cited, which show considerable positive correlations, the current study shows a minor, non-significant negative relationship between global religion and emotions among adults: the correlation coefficient was $r = -.053$, $p = .292$, whereas the regression analysis returned the coefficient of $\beta = -.053$, $p = .292$. This result implies that global religious orientation does not predict general emotional functioning among adults. The obtained findings support recent methodological critiques and reviews in the field of psychology of religion. For example, Brandão (2025) and Sedikides and Gebauer (2010) said that overall directions of the relation between specific types of religion and some aspects of psychology are weak, very dependent on the cultural context, and sensitive to the definitions of the constructs. It is possible that data about global religious orientation reflect not the active emotional regulation strategies, but rather generally cultural attitudes toward religion (Exline, 2013). Moreover, as pointed out by Allport and Ross (1967), the consolidation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can dull conflicting psychological processes. Research shows that intrinsic religiosity is positively associated with positive emotional results, while extrinsically religiosity relates to negative emotions (Łowicki & Zajenkowski, 2017; Banazadeh et al., 2019). Therefore, the merged data used in this study could diminish these subtle subscale links.

Limitations and Recommendations

Some methodological limitations should be considered.

- First, due to the cross-sectional investigation, it is not possible to make any conclusions about the direction of the relationships between variables.
- Secondly, the application of self-report questionnaires is likely to increase common-method bias and social desirability biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

- Thirdly, treating emotional functioning as a one-dimensional measure disregards its complexity.

Future research should utilize longitudinal studies, multi-dimensional instruments measuring emotion regulation, and separate analysis of both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity in order to make the mechanisms of the phenomenon clearer.

Conclusion

To conclude, the current research revealed that the global religious orientation had no significant relationship with emotional functioning among 400 adults. The results provide important insights into the understanding of the complication of religion-emotion connection and highlight the necessity for future psychological research to shift from the use of global composite indices to detailed multiple-dimensional ones.

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