


Islamic Religiosity and Life Satisfaction: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

Background of the study: The present research paper investigates the relationship between Islamic Religiosity and satisfaction with life while also considering gender differences. Hypotheses are: 1) Islamic Religiosity would positively relate to life satisfaction, and 2) Religious female participants would be more satisfied with life than male participants.

Methodology: A hundred Muslim participants (50 male & 50 female) aged 18 to 30 were recruited. Response data were collected through purposive sampling by administering RoIS (Religiosity of Islam Scale) and SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale). The data was analyzed using Pearson product and t-test.

Results: The results show no significant relationship between Islamic religion and life satisfaction; however, a significant difference was indicated that females were more religious than males, but there was no significant difference in life satisfaction.

Conclusions: The present paper contributes significantly to knowledge and insight regarding this topic in the context of Muslims

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Introduction

Islamic Religiosity encompasses various beliefs, practices, and attitudes central to every Muslim's life (Shamsuddin, 1992). It includes the adherence to belief and rituals, pursuit of knowledge, expression of faith and many other aspects (Khraim, 2010). As a comprehensive way of living, Islam guides all Muslims and gives them a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Hood et al., 2009). One important aspect of Islamic Religiosity that has recently become the focus of attention is their connection with well-being and life satisfaction (Bergan & McConatha, 2001).

Life satisfaction, often considered an indicator of well-being, evaluates one's life and the degree to which they feel fulfilled and are

content (Diener & Clifton, 2002). It encompasses physical health, relationships, financial stability and overall happiness (Sabatier et al., 2011).

Religiosity has impacted various aspects of human life, such as economics, education, culture, and politics. (Gill et al., 2010). It also influences individual satisfaction with life (Joshanloo, 2021).

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The relationship between life satisfaction and religion has also been studied in the context of religion and income. It has significantly impacted individuals' satisfaction with life (Plouffe & Tremblay, 2017). Cohen et al. (2005) have identified two dimensions that positively affect life satisfaction: extrinsic and intrinsic Religiosity. Additionally, Fard, Shahabi, and Zardkhaneh (2013) found that Religiosity has a broad and dynamic relationship with life satisfaction and emotional impact on social pleasure and marital satisfaction.

Somniferous studies have shown that Religiosity has a positive relationship with mental well-being, including significant areas such as depression, perceived quality of life and life satisfaction (Ellison and Henderson, 2011; Witter et al., 1985; Yeary et al., 2012). However, the relationship between religion and life satisfaction may differ depending on the background, with weaker associations with countries with diverse cultural backgrounds and highly populated countries (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2009). It remains to be seen whether being religious in a secularized and pluralistic context increases or decreases life satisfaction.

There is also a need to explore the relationship regarding Islamic Religiosity as most of the extensive work has been done on Christianity, leaving this domain understudied (Cohen, 2002; Abdel-Khalek, 2010). Interesting cases were also reported from the Netherlands regarding religious context, as Christian values are more criticized, and religious individuals do not hold privileged social positions (Achterberg et al., 2009; de Koster et al., 2010; Houtman and Mascini, 2002). The country's further religious diversity, with protestants, Catholics, and Muslims being the largest religious group, adds further complexity to understanding the relationship between religion and life satisfaction (Chaves and Gorski, 2001; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Rath et al., 1999).

Further studies have also been done on spiritual and religious beliefs, which have been found to strengthen the individual's coping mechanism and provide a sense of hope and fulfilment (Friedli 2009; Zahedi 2011). Research on spirituality has provided significant insight into life satisfaction and other dimensions such as self-regard, practice, happiness, forgiveness and gratitude (Krauss 2005). Life satisfaction derives happiness from fulfilling desires and needs, with subjective well-being consisting of feelings and emotions (Oishi et al. 2004). Extensive research has also been done on the relationship between life satisfaction and various domains, such as age, gender, and Religiosity and has yielded mixed results for both positive and negative associations (Gwozdz and Sousa-Poza 2010).

Life satisfaction has also been studied in the context of spiritual intelligence, which indicates the purpose and gives meaning to life (Kadkhoda and Jahani, 2012; Ronel and Gan, 2008). Multiple researches distinguish the relationship between Religiosity and spirituality, highlighting their individual and social aspects (Krauss 2005). Different definitions of Religiosity and religious personality are mentioned, particularly in an Islamic context (Shamsuddin 1992; Khraim 2010). The connection between

age, Religiosity and well-being research has provided evidence that religiosity and life satisfaction increase with age (Veenhoven 1996). This study aims to investigate the relationship between Islamic Religiosity and life satisfaction while also considering gender differences among Pakistani Muslims. Moreover, studies exploring gender differences in Religiosity found that women tend to be more religious than men in most nations and religions.

Hypotheses

Based upon the objectives of the current study, it was hypothesized that:

- 1) Religiosity will positively predict life satisfaction in Islamic faith groups
- 2) Religious women will be more satisfied than males.

The study aims to explore how religion influences life satisfaction in a pluralistic context. The hypotheses tested in the study are derived from existing literature, focusing on the cultural and structural aspects of belonging within a religious community.

Rationale & Significance

In the context of Islamic Religiosity, understanding the relationship between religious beliefs, practices, and life satisfaction is of great significance, as it sheds light on the role of Islam in shaping the subjective well-being of Muslims (Koenig et al., 1988b). This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge with respect to the Islamic religion and its impact on overall well-being.

Literature Review

Their Islamic religiosity has significantly impacted Muslims' well-being, well-being, and contentment with life. Recently, the search for connections concerning the link between life satisfaction and religious identity, with the distinction of religion, has become more active. This paper reviews the literature on the level of happiness in life and Islamic religiosity alongside various factors and components in this relationship.

Islamic Religiosity and Well-being

It is a fact that essential aspects of a Muslim's identity in terms of values, practices and beliefs are matters of their worship and faith. Religious originality: In the present study, using the constructs of Shamsuddin (1992) and Khraim (2010), it was identified as giving Muslims directions and meaning/purpose. Often, individuals who claim to be religious seem to express higher levels of life satisfaction; this is so because new findings have revealed a direct correlation between spirituality and well-being (Bergan & McConatha, 2001).

Life Satisfaction

Diener and Clifton (2002) state that life satisfaction is one of the central elements of well-being as it captures a person's overall level of satisfaction. Sabatier et al. (2011) opined that it comprises several domains: happiness, relationships, financial status, and health status. Studies have also shown the correlation between religiosity and personal well-being (Plouffe & Tremblay, 2017).

Relationship Between Religiosity and Life Satisfaction

A lot of research has been done on the connection between religious attitudes and quality of life. Therefore, the extrinsic aspect of religiosity, as postulated by Cohen et al. (2005), positively affects life satisfaction. Fard Shahabi and Zardkhaneh's research (2013) indicate that religiosity plays a role in social pleasure and marital satisfaction and has a broad and active relationship with life satisfaction.

Mental Well-being and Religiosity

The current literature (Ellison & Henderson, 2011; Witter et al., 1985; Yeary et al., 2012) has established a positive relationship between religion and mental health regarding depression, perceived quality of life, and life satisfaction. In response to the arguments and hypothesis of Okulicz-Kozaryn (2009), cultural and demographic factors can either strengthen or weaken the above association.

Gender Differences in Religiosity

According to Chipperfield and Havens (2001), women are known to practice more than males in most countries and religions, with this finding revealing a myriad of impacts on women's satisfaction with their lives. Studies on gender and religion have pointed out outstanding trends in life happiness, psychological health, and spiritual intelligence (Yuen & Furnham, 2006; Hutchinson et al., 2004).

Cultural Context

This, similar to the practice and salary moderation, suggests that the potential relationship between religiousness and satisfaction with life might be contingent upon the subjects' religious and cultural origins. Organized religions may be less associated with a person's satisfaction with life in pluralistic societies (Achterberg et al., 2009; Houtman et al., 2011). There is relatively little research conducted on nations where a large percentage of the population is Muslim, which underlines the urgency of researching this topic further (Cohen, 2002; Abdel-Khalek, 2010).

Spirituality and Coping Mechanisms

Religious and spiritual attitudes are crucial as they give people hope, thus helping them build their ways of dealing with problems (Friedli, 2009; Zahedi, 2011). According to Krauss (2005), spirituality is linked to some facets of well-being, including gratitude, self-worth, contentment, and forgiveness.

Methodology

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

University students between 18 and 30 were included, both male and female. Any non-Muslim participant was excluded. The age range of 18-30 encompasses young adulthood, a critical developmental stage where individuals often form and solidify their religious beliefs and practices.

Participant Characteristics

The primary demographic characteristics based on participants were selected were 1) age 18-30, 2) male and female, 3) Muslims, 4) university-going students.

Other than this, educational background, as well as current level of education and ethnicity, should have been taken into consideration.

Sampling procedure

The participants were selected based on the purposive convenience sampling method. Data was collected in different locations based on the availability and convenience of participants, such as the library, classroom, lobby, etc. Survey questionnaires were administered only when the participant agreed; no incentive was given during and after the data collection. Before administering the questionnaire, permission was granted from the institute or the available charge of the room, such as the librarian, for the safety and ethical standards for research participation.

Sample size

The sample size for this research was 100 university participants, of which 50 were male participants, and 50 were female. The intended sample size and achieved sample size were both 100.

Material

Instrument

1. SWLS (Satisfaction with Life scale): The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by psychologist Ed Diener in 1985 to measure life satisfaction. Its psychometric properties are

Reliability

- a. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the SWLS have been reported to range from 0.79 to 0.89, indicating good internal consistency and reliability.
- b. Test-retest reliability coefficients over a 4 to 8-week period have been found to range from 0.68 to 0.84, suggesting reasonable stability over time.

Validity

- a. Construct validity of the SWLS has been demonstrated through factor analysis, supporting a unidimensional structure with all items contributing to a single underlying construct of life satisfaction.
 - b. The SWLS has shown convergent solid validity, as it correlates positively with other measures of subjective well-being, happiness, and mental health.
 - c. Discriminant validity of the SWLS has been established by demonstrating weak or no correlations with measures of depression, anxiety, and negative affect.
 - d. The SWLS has been found to have good concurrent validity, showing significant correlations with other established measures of life satisfaction and well-being.
2. Asma Jana-Masir and Paul E. Priester developed RoIS (the Religiosity of Islam scale). Its psychometric properties are:

Reliability

- a. The Islamic Beliefs subscale had an overall Cronbach's alpha of .66, indicating acceptable reliability.

- b. The Islamic Behavioral Practices subscale had an overall Cronbach's alpha of .81, indicating good reliability.

Validity

- a. Confirmatory factor analysis supported using the two subscales, providing evidence for factorial validity.
- b. Scree plot analysis and eigenvalue analysis indicated that both subscales had eigenvalues over 1.0, further supporting construct validity.
- c. Concurrent validity was demonstrated by strong positive relationships between the Islamic Beliefs subscale and a similar item from a different instrument ($r = .42$, $p < .0001$), as well as between the Islamic Behavioral Practices subscale and the exact item ($r = .47$, $p < .00001$).

Data collection

Through purposive convenience sampling, data was collected in the form of responses from the questionnaire participants. Taking ethical considerations into account, verbal consent was obtained, and the participants tried to resolve the issue as best as possible. Participants were also briefed about the purpose of the questionnaire. Participants were also assured of their participation's confidentiality, but if they asked, "Can we not write down our name?" the researcher responded in affirmation.

Research design

The research design was based on a nonexperimental survey-based correlational study design; there were two independent groups (I.e., male and female groups) for comparison, and both groups responded to the same survey questions based on two scale SWLs (Satisfaction with Life scale) and RoIS (The Religiosity of Islam scale)

Analytic Strategy

For raw data statistics, the researcher applied descriptive analysis mean, standard deviation, Pearson product and one test from inferential statistics unrelated to the T-Test. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS, ensuring accurate and reliable results.

Results

The above table shows the data analysis of the 100 participants (50 male and 50 female). Pearson product was applied to assess the relationship between Islamic Religiosity and satisfaction with life. Inconsistent with the primary hypothesis (1), though life satisfaction was detected positively with the Islamic religion group, no significant relationship was detected.

variable	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>r</i>	Strength and relationship
RoIS	8933	89.83	14.3	0.084	Positive and weak
SWLs	2446	24.46	5.98		

Table 01: Correlational results: Islamic Religiosity and life satisfaction relationship

The above table shows the comparison data analysis of 50 male and 50 female participants to assess the difference in male and female scores, an unrelated t-test was applied on $\alpha=0.05$, inconsistent with the hypothesis (2) that religious females would be more satisfied with life than males was invalidated.

gender	variable	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>t</i>	significance
female	RoIS & SWLs	50	58.97	32.40	0.74	Non- significant
male	RoIS & SWLs	50	55.32	34.81		

Table 02: t-test calculation between male and female Islamic and life satisfaction variables.

Discussion

Both hypotheses, that the higher the Islamic Religiosity, the higher satisfaction with life will be rated and that females would be more satisfied with life than males, were not supported by the data analysis results. To test the hypotheses, the researcher applied Pearson product to analyze the primary hypothesis, I.e., the relationship between Islamic Religiosity and life satisfaction. The results were yielded in a positive direction (half supporting the hypothesis), but the relation is close to 0, indicating a weak relationship; thus, not supporting the hypothesis. The secondary hypothesis, I.e., religious female participants will show higher life satisfaction compared to male participants, was assessed through an unrelated t-test, which yielded no significant difference, thus not supporting the hypothesis. These results contradict the research findings of different researchers such as it was demonstrated in multiple research that the more committed a person is, the more they will be satisfied with life as compared to less committed person (Hadaway, 1978; Ellison, 1991; Ferriss, 2002; Krause, 2003; McKnight, 2005; AbdelKhalek, 2006; Tuzgöl Dost, 2007; Lim and Putnam, 2010; Inglehart, 2010, and Ismail & Desmukh, 2012). The results of this present research paper are also dissimilar from those (Munawar & Tariq 2017). The objective of their study was very similar to the present papers, but they found a significant positive correlation.

A positive correlation was found in regards to practising rituals which gave meaning to Muslims' lives (Maltby et al. 2004; Peacock and Poloma 1999), but such a relationship was not found in this research paper. One aspect found in this research paper was that females were more religious than males, but that did not affect the overall rating of life satisfaction, though minor. This aspect is somewhat similar to research where gender difference was found concerning life satisfaction in association with spiritual intelligence, psychological well-being, as well as in Terms of Religiosity (Chipperfield and Havens 2001; Yuen and Furnham 2006; Hutchinson et al. 2004; Sullins 2006).

There are multiple explanations which can help us understand the possible reasons for invalidation. After careful consideration, it was noticed that the concept construct between the two scales (namely RoIS and SWLs) was different, I.e., the RoIS scale was based on a theory-based concept as compared to SWLs, which is more based on materialistic/accomplishment-based. The difference in construct introduces a potential risk for biasness and thus makes the obtained results unreliable. It also makes comparison less meaningful, less valid and less formative.

Another possible explanation is the two variables' reverse directionality in the hypothesized relationship. For instance, since there was a positive correlation but weak, the directionality was predicted wrong. There is some existing literature available on both positive and negative relationships between the Islamic religion and various other aspects related to mental well-being (Pargament et al., 1998; Nooney and Woodrum, 2002; Masters and Spielmans, 2007).

Another explanation is the involvement of variables which were not considered primarily by the researcher, such as the generation gap; it was noted during the scoring of raw data of individual participants that some younger generations were less practising the religion than the older generation as well as they had varying disbeliefs about the Islamic concepts which are central in the teaching of Islam, but that did not affect their overall scoring on the life satisfaction scale. This difference in individual concepts, central to our research, might have negatively impacted the findings. The last variable to consider is the pluralistic ethnic context of the participants; Pakistan is a well-populated country with various Islamic groups with varying concepts and beliefs in their Group. For instance, Okulicz-Kozaryn (2009) found that the association between religion and life satisfaction is weaker in pluralistic countries. Various studies have also provided significant insight into religion's influence on life satisfaction (Achterberg et al., 2009; Houtman et al., 2011; Inglehart, 2000; Ribberink et al., 2013). Also, according to these researches, it remains to be seen whether the Islamic religion affects life satisfaction in the same order as American religions since it is a very understudied topic.

Limitations

Though the sample size was insufficient, the sample cannot be considered representative since it was from a selected area of Karachi, affecting the generalizability of the study. Our results are based on young participants, which has also decreased the generalizability of our study (Golden et al. 2008). Our instrument used to measure the participants' Islamic Religiosity and life satisfaction level also negatively

impacted this paper's findings. The last limitation was social desirability; even though participants were rest assured by the researcher of the confidentiality of participation, participants visibly chose whose responses were highly affected by their gender role, especially male participants. The study's strengths relate to the methodological approach, the utilization of specific and consistent assessment instruments, the sample size, issues to do with the ethical aspect, and the use of a clear and precise research hypothesis. These aspects enhance the reliability and credibility of your research and hence provide a good foundation on which other research can be carried out in this area.

Future recommendations

More extensive research must be done to better understand the complex relationship between Islamic religion and life satisfaction. Current paper results are based on young participants' data; for better understanding and determining the influence of religion on life satisfaction by following proper teachings for future recommendations, new research can be done on older participants. The current paper is a survey paper or better insight. The researcher recommends using different research designs to draw a cause-and-effect relationship. Most studies are done in Muslim minority countries, which suggests replication of such studies in Muslim-populated countries. By implementing these recommendations into future studies, researchers can contribute to the growing body of knowledge, improve research quality, and provide more intensive insight into the study variables in this paper.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present paper's results, though invalidating the hypothesis, still provided us with a stepping stone to further investigate the association between Islamic Religiosity and satisfaction with life variables. Acknowledging the limitations and challenges faced by this research paper makes it evident that further research is needed for a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

Author's Contribution:

Conception or Design: Humera Noor

Analysis or Interpretation of Data: Humera Noor

Manuscript Writing & Approval: Humera Noor

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