

Religiosity, Spirituality, Emotional Well-being and Contentment among Muslim Religious Scholars

Dr. Fatima Murtaza

Department of Psychology, GC University, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: fatimaqmc@rocketmail.com

Zeeshan Bashir

Department of Psychology, GC University, Lahore, Pakistan

Email:

Abstract:

Religiosity and spirituality play a key role in subjective well-being of human. The aim of the current research was to explore the link between religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing among religious scholars. Correlation research design was used in this study. The study was conducted in different religious institutions and mosques of the Lahore during 2017-2018. Purposive convenient sampling technique was used to select N=110 male religious scholars with age range from 35 to 65 years. Revised Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (Hill, 1999), Spirituality Scale (Delaney, 2003), Contentment with Life Assessment Scale (Lorain, Hatch, Alex & Tara, 2007) and Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire (Karlfeldt, 2002) were used in Urdu translated version for data collection. The participants were very well informed with the purpose and objective of the study. Pearson correlation analysis, Simple Linear Regression analysis and Independent Sample t-Test were used to measure the results. Findings revealed positive significant correlation between religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing among religious scholars. It also revealed that religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing positively predict contentment among religious scholars. The results of Independent sample t-Test showed that more religious scholars scored higher on religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing than average religious scholars but their score was low on contentment. The results indicated that religiosity and spirituality have important role being emotionally well and contented with life. It also revealed that religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing positively predict contentment. The study highlights the importance of religiosity and spirituality to lead a contented life.

Keywords: *Religiosity, Spirituality, Contentment, Religious Scholars*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the human history and civilization, the religion has been one of the major foundations of the development (Vukonic, 1996). The attitudes and values of individuals as well as societies are reflected by the ideas that religion defines (Erdogen, Fam & Waller, 2004). The behaviors, actions and practices of individuals' as well as institutions are shaped by these predefined attitudes and values.

Religiosity and spirituality are one of those emerging topics that have caught the attention of the mental and physical health professionals and especially the role of religiosity and spirituality in overall wellbeing caught the attention of many researchers (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Both of these two domains have positive significant relationships with contentment, subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, positivity, emotional regulation, reduction of stress etc. (Hawks, Hull, Thalman & Richins, 1995):

Religiosity

Religiosity is a multidimensional phenomenon. It includes empirical, consequential, credal, intellectual, ceremonial, mutual, ideological, doctrinal, moral and cultural dimensions (Hood, 2000). Very simply it can mean 'piety' or 'state of being religiousness'. State of being superficially religious can also be defined as religiosity (Kidder, 2003).

Throughout all the religions religiosity is taken as the religious activity in the extreme. Person affiliation and participation in these religious activities are considered the key components of religiosity. Fulfilling rituals and worshipping God to seek His bliss is religiosity (Prashar, 2013). Religiosity can be defined as ‘a set of beliefs that concern the cause, purpose and nature of this universe that involve religious and ceremonial observations and also have a complete moral code of conduct’. It is a belief system in which a number of people of society agreed (McCullough, 2000).

Religiosity can be referred as observable and prescribed behaviors that can have legalization and support from some identified social groups of people who are the part of the same society and they evaluate individuals’ behaviors (Belavich & Butfer, 2015). Koenig defined some dominant dimensions of religiosity as ‘accepting the certain dogmas of religious traditions, faith; different non-organized and organized groups performing religious practices and ceremonials; experiencing God’s presence; being well aware of the wisdom and knowledge linked with belief system, holy books of religion and traditional ceremonials, rituals and practices of a particular religion; and the extent of establishing community for its member which is purely religious’ (Smiley, Gonzales & Koenig, 1998).

Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity

The two emerging and basic components of religiosity are intrinsic religiosity and extrinsic religiosity. Ross defined these components as ‘understanding religion, living according to religious beliefs, having a great sense of God’s presence, and seeking peace, happiness and comfort from religion in sorrows and pain’ (Ross, 1967).

Intrinsic religiosity

Being more mature and to see the religion as end to itself is intrinsic religiosity. Intrinsically motivated people believe faith as an ultimate value in itself and they lead their lives according to the religion (Donahue, 1995).

Extrinsic religiosity

In comparison of intrinsic, extrinsic religiosity is a belief that is immature and religion is not seen as an end to itself but it is seen as more of a means to some other end. For extrinsically oriented people the motivators are some social factors like advancement, social acceptance, relationships and sense of belongingness (Donahue, 1995).

Religiosity in Islam

Religiosity in Islam is based on the holy book Qura’n and Hadith (the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad ‘Peace be Upon Him’). There are four basic dimensions of Muslims’ religiosity: religious practices, belief, enrichment (long life learning) and altruism (doing well to others) (Hill, 2000).

Believing Allah Almighty as the Only Creature and there is no God except Him; believing the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the last prophet of Allah; offering Namaz (prayer five times a day); having Fasts (in the holy month of Ramadan); Paying Zakat (an act of charity); and doing Hajj (Ziarat of Khan Ka'ba and the sacred shrine of the Rasool; Hazrat Muhammad 'SAW') are the major pillars of Islam. Muslims are not only confined to these five pillars but also they believe in other moral principles. They seek all guidance and light from the life and message of Holy Prophet (PBUH) to deal with every matter of their life.

They believe fulfilling these codes of conduct will make them able to get everlasting rewards from Allah Almighty, and they are also expected to be punished if they do not.

Spirituality

Spirituality has emerged as a distinct construct and focus of research in the past several decades¹⁴. Previously undifferentiated from religiousness, numerous forms of faith under the label "spirituality" have risen in popularity from the 1980s to the present. References to spirituality in the Religion Index increased substantially from the 1940s and 1950s to the present (Scott, 1995), and spirituality has received increasing attention within psychology in terms of measurement and scale development. These changes have occurred against a background of decline in traditional

religious institutions, an increase in individualized forms of faith expression, movement from an emphasis on belief toward direct experience of the sacred, and a U.S. culture of religious pluralism (Roof, 1993).

Spirituality is misinterpreted and very much confused with religiosity. It is a novel concept and it has also many dimensions like religiosity. Several studies have shown spirituality as a separate construct from religiosity. Spirituality can be defined as ‘a way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred (Puchalski, 2009).

Spirituality is also defined as any experience that is thought to bring experimenter into contact with the Divine (Mario & Denyse, 2001). It is a subjective experience of the sacred (Vaughan, 1991). Spirituality involves religious practices and spiritual beliefs (George, 2000).

Spirituality in Islam

All the religious practices the Muslims perform are spiritual as it is accordance to seek Allah’s pleasure. This view comes from the religion Islam or understanding of ‘Tauheed’ (Oneness of Allah Almighty). It can be said that when Muslims performs rituals and religious practices just and only to seek God’s pleasure, it is spirituality. They seek inner peace, find meaning and develop a sense of relationship and connectedness with Allah

and His creation. It develops a constant awareness, mindfulness and consciousness of Allah in everything the Muslims say or do (Ismail, 2012).

Religiosity and spirituality

Religion is belief in someone else's experience. Spirituality is having your own experience (Deepak, 2007). Both of these phenomena are used interchangeably. Religiosity and spirituality sometimes are considered synonyms of each other. Both share some common features and also have key differences.

Distinguishing spirituality from religiosity

Spirituality is distinguished from religiosity with these three key differences (Mattis, 2000). First, religion is defined as organized worship whereas spirituality as personal values. Second, religiosity is associated with a path or journey and spirituality as an effect. Finally religiosity is closely linked to worship experiences and spirituality is associated with relationship.

Spirituality can also be distinguished from religiosity on the basis of the following concepts:

1. There are no hard and fast set rules, beliefs, specific ideology and values in spirituality. Rules and values are set by the individuals themselves.

2. Spirituality is based only on love not fear. In religion individuals have a lot of fear—fear of consequences of their actions, fear of what might happen if they died and had not led their lives according to their religion. Whereas in spirituality encourages individuals to focus on good and act only based on love.
3. Religiosity tells truth but spirituality lets it discovered.
4. Religion separates and spirituality unites.

Religiosity and spirituality sharing common features

Religiosity and spirituality are tied together through their common denominator of the sacred, which for most religious and spiritual individuals is the most vital destination (Mattis, 2000). Both elements share a search for the sacred, a pursuit for peace and guidance, and a connection with a higher power through meditation, prayer, worship, contemplation, or self-examination (Witmer & Sweeny, 1992).

Several studies have explained that spirituality may incorporate elements of religion, it is a broader concept. Religion and spirituality are not the same, nor do they entirely differ from each other. In spirituality the questions are where do I personally find meaning, connection, and value? In religiosity the questions are what is true and right? There are some

overlapping aspects in religiosity and spirituality such as belief, reflection, comfort, ethics and awe (Drabbs, 2010).

Contentment

The term contentment is often considered the synonym of happiness and it represents individuals' overall life satisfaction. Contentment can be defined as 'the extent to which people perceive that their needs, wants and desires are met. It is a cognitive evaluation in which individuals compare their live that what they now are and what their life might be. This evaluation of the people about the needs and wants whether met or not, estimates success among them. It can be said that it is a cognitive component of happiness (Becker, 2007).

Contentment can also be defined as 'state of satisfaction either mental or emotional mental or emotional that can be drawn from being satisfied and happy in one's situation. It is a state in which individuals accept their situation and is the uncertain—milder or more, form of happiness (Veenhoven, 2009).

Contentment is being happy and satisfied with what individual is. The term contentment is often related to life satisfaction but there are some distinct differences in contentment and life satisfaction. Being content with life is being more generally satisfied so that one is without want in enough areas to be blissfully happy. It means if one is contented to his life (s)he

needs nothing, (s)he is well with what (s)he is; and satisfaction means to be satisfied in more specific needs. It is not necessary that contented people have all their needs met. They remain contented and happy even some of their needs go unmet. It can also be used in terms of degrees. One is content, when one doesn't want to pursue an area further. Satisfaction is the degree where one has enough to fill ones wants (Rayo, 2007).

Emotional wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing is characterized by a stable mood, ability to experience, manage and express emotions, acceptance of self and other, a positive outlook and freedom from worry. Emotional wellbeing can be defined as ‘a cognitive appraisal of satisfaction with life in general and a positive balance of pleasant and unpleasant affect’ (Keyes, 2003).

Emotional wellbeing encourages self-care, easing, being calm and the development of relationships, maintaining work and finance. In the review of some sociologists and psychologists emotional wellbeing is be seen as a basic component of positive mental health. The presence of mental health can be defined as ‘flourishing’, a condition that is characterized by the presence of high level of Emotional wellbeing and positive functioning (Joiner, 2002).

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To be aware of the value of the emotions and use these emotions to move forward in the positive direction is referred as emotional wellbeing. Individuals who can have best control on their emotions and focus on their positive potentials enjoy good health and good life. They can cope with stressful events easily and their focus always remains on important personal priorities (Fredrickson, 2002).

Ahmed, (2010) found religiosity as a salient component of, and contribution factor to, quality of life and over all subjective wellbeing. Religiosity is a positive predictor of subjective wellbeing and mental health wellness (Zainab, 2017). Many of other researches on these constructs highlight its correlation with positivity, happiness, subjective wellbeing, contentment other dimensions of wellbeing.

Rationale of the Study

This study was conducted with the aim to explore that how much level of religiosity and spirituality is important to lead a contented, happy, full and emotionally well life (Koeing, 2012). The sample was religious scholars of Muslim community because they have much affiliation with religion and their lives are based purely on religious orientation and

spirituality. The study also aimed to examine that how much contented and emotionally well the religious scholars themselves are; as they preach other to resort to religious activities such as prayer, recitation of holy Quran, to go in religious gatherings when they feel distress, disturbance and anxiety.

Objectives

- To explore the relationships between religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing among religious scholars.
- To find out the mean differences between more religious and average religious scholars on religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing among religious scholars.
- To predict the relationships of religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing with contentment.

Hypothesis

H1: There would be strong positive relationship between religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional well-being among religious scholars.

H2: Religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing would positively predict contentment among religious scholars.

H3: There would be significant mean difference of more religious and average religious scholars on religiosity, spirituality, emotional wellbeing and contentment.

Method

Research Design and Participants

Correlation study design was carried out by using purposive convenient sampling technique on a sample of $N=110$ male religious scholars from the different institutions and mosques of Lahore city with the age range of 35-65 years. The participants not meeting the criteria of age were excluded from the study.

Instruments

Demographic sheet.

Demographic sheet consisting of the questions regarding participants' name, age, education, socioeconomic status, monthly income, duration of service in the Mosque / Madrasah, religious affiliation, sect of religion was obtained from the participants.

Contentment with life assessment scale

Contentment with life assessment scale (Lavalley, L. F., Hatch, P. M., Michalos, A. C., & McKinley, T., 2007) having 1-7 likert type scale

was used in its Urdu translation. It has good reliability of .85 for this sample.

The scale has five items. Item 3 and 4 of this scale have reversed coding.

Emotional well-being questionnaire

Emotional wellbeing questionnaire (Karlfeldt, 2002) was used to measure emotional wellbeing. It has good reliability of .65 for this sample.

The scale consists of 15 statements can be answered in Yes or No. It has four subscales. Item 1-5 shows Self-Care, Item 6-9 indicates Relationships, Item 10-12 represents Finances and Item 13-15 shows work components of the scale.

Revised intrinsic/extrinsic religious orientation scale

To measure religiosity revised intrinsic/extrinsic religious orientation scale (Hill, 1999) was used. It has good reliability of .70. The scale has 1-5 likert type scale. The scale has 14 items having 7 items for intrinsic religious orientation (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13) and 7 items for extrinsic religious orientation (1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 14). Each item is scored at 1-5 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree).

Spirituality scale

23-item spirituality scale (Delaney, C., 2005) was used to measure spirituality. It has 1-6 likert type scale and a good reliability of .90 for this population. The scale has three subscales. Item 1, 2, 3 and 4 are used for Self-discovery subscale; item 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22 and 23

shows Eco-awareness component of spirituality scale; and item 10, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 20 shows Relationship subscale of spirituality scale.

Procedure

The whole study was conducted according to APA code of conduct. Permission was taken from the concerned authorities of the Madrasahs in Lahore city for collecting the data. The researcher explained the importance of research to the participants. Participants having age range from 35- 65 and so on were recruited from Lahore city. Participants were ensured that the information they were given will not be disclosed and their responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of academic research. The questionnaires were distributed to the participants. They were asked to read the instructions carefully and then fill the questionnaires. Participants took 30-40 mints to fill the questionnaires. They cooperated well during data collection. Their queries were also concerned and they were answered properly. Scoring of the questionnaires was done according to scoring keys. Correlation Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Regression Analysis and Independent Sample t-test were computed on SPSS (Version 21).

Results

The present study included $N=110$ religious scholars from Lahore city with the age range of 35-65 years to measure correlation of religiosity,

spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing, and also to see whether religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing predict contentment or not. It was measured the mean differences of more religious and average religious scholars on religiosity, spirituality, contentment and emotional wellbeing. The results of the study are as following:

Reliability Analysis

The results of Reliability Analysis show that Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire has good reliability .61, Religiosity Scale has higher reliability .70, Contentment with Life Assessment Scale has higher reliability .85 and Spirituality Scale also has higher reliability .90.

Table 1

Alpha Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire, Revised Intrinsic / Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale, Contentment with Life Assessment Scale and Spirituality Scale (N=110)

Scales	<i>k</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>a</i>
EWBQ	15	22.94	2.81	.61
RI/EROS	14	49.45	6.41	.70
CLAS	5	27.29	5.67	.85
SS	23	114.05	12.88	.90

Note:- *k*: Number of items, *a*: Cronbach's Alpha EWBQ: Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire, RI/EROS: Revised Intrinsic / Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale, CLAS: Contentment with Life Assessment Scale, SS: Spirituality Scale.

Correlation

Results of Pearson correlation showed that Emotional Wellbeing had positive significant correlation with Religiosity ($r = .20, p < .05$) and Contentment ($r = .22, p < .05$). The results also indicated that there was positive significant correlation between Religiosity and Contentment ($r = .23, p < .05$). Also there was positive highly significant association between Religiosity and Spirituality ($r = .27, p < .01$). The results revealed that Contentment had positive highly significant correlation with Spirituality ($r = .43, p < .01$) see table 2.

Table 2

Intra-correlation among Emotional Wellbeing, Religiosity, Contentment and Spirituality (N=110)

Variables	I	II	III
I. EWB	--	.20*	.22*
II. Religiosity		--	.23*
III. Contentment			--
IV. Spirituality			

Note: -** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, EWB: Emotional Wellbeing

Regression

The results of the Linear Regression analysis indicated that religiosity ($\beta = .06, t(109) = (.65, p < .05$), spirituality ($\beta = .42, t(109) = (4.91, p < .01)$) and emotional wellbeing ($\beta = .18, t(109) = (2.04, p < .05)$) positively predicted contentment. The value of $R^2 = .22$ indicates 22% variance in contentment is accounted for by religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing among religious scholars. See table 3.

Table 3.

Religiosity, Spirituality and Emotional Wellbeing as predictors of

Contentment (N=110)

Variable	β	B	SE	t(109)	P
Religiosity	.06	.09	.15	.65	.01
Spirituality	.42	.18	.04	4.74	.00
Emotional Wellbeing	.18	.34	.17	2.04	.04
R ²	.22				
F	9.76				

Note:- **p < .01, *p < .05

Independent Sample t-test

The results of independent sample t-test indicated that there was significant difference in means and standard deviations of more religious (M = 23.05, SD = 3.00) and average religious (M = 22.54, SD = 1.98) on Emotional Wellbeing. The table also indicated the significant difference in the means and standard deviations of more religious (M = 52.08, SD = 1.98) and average religious (M = 50.88, SD = 5.80) on Religiosity. The results also showed that on Spirituality there was significant difference in the means and standard deviations of more religious (M = 114.70, SD = 12.75) and average religious (M = 111.71, SD = 13.31). The outcome of the independent sample t-test showed that there was significant difference in the means and standard deviations on contentment of more religious (M = 27.08, SD = 5.99) and average religious (M = 28.04, SD = 4.33) see table 4.

Table 4

Independent Sample t-test of scales of Emotional Wellbeing, Religiosity, Spirituality and Contentment (N=110)

Scales	n = 86 More Religious		n = 24 Average Religious		t(108)	P	95% confidence interval of the difference		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
Emotional Wellbeing	23.05	3.00	22.54	1.98	.78	.04	-.78	1.79	
Religiosity	52.08	3.75	50.88	5.80	.14	.02	-.44	2.85	
Spirituality	114.70	12.75	111.71	13.31	1.01	.01	-2.90	8.88	

ment	27.08	5.99	28.04	4.33	-.73	.04	-3.56	1.64
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Note:- ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; EWB: Emotional Wellbeing; LL: Lower Limit; UL: Upper Limit

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore relationship between religiosity, spirituality, emotional wellbeing and contentment among religious scholars. The results accepted the first hypothesis of the study. The scholars who score high on religiosity were found having highly contented with their lives and emotionally well. It is also seen that highly level of spirituality also lead to high level of religiosity and then religiosity causes contentment among religious scholars. Contentment also has positive correlation with spirituality that can cause of high emotional wellness among religious scholars. It is also predicted by the study that the more individuals are religious, emotionally well and spiritual the more they are contented with their lives. Religiosity, spirituality and contentment all three variables positively predict contentment among religious scholars. The study also highlighted mean differences of more religious and average religious scholars (a demographic variable) on religiosity, spirituality, emotional wellbeing and contentment. It is seen that the more religious oriented scholars have high level of religiosity, spirituality and emotional wellbeing. But they have low score on contentment. This point can capture the attention of the new researchers that how this might be possible that more religious

oriented scholars were found less contented with life. Perhaps they remain in constant worry whether their creator Allah is pleased by their actions or not. There can be many possibilities to this point.

Limitations and Recommendations

There are some limitations that the researcher had to face, and some suggestions for the further studies in this field are as following:

- Due to time restrains the sample size was small that can be enlarged for more researches. Researcher had to reduce the sample size as some religious scholars were not willing to participate; they were much conscious about to fill the questionnaires.
- The data was collected only from the Lahore city (Pakistan) and the results cannot be generalized to all religious scholars. It is suggested that the research on the same topic can be conducted on the sample from different cities of Pakistan especially from rural areas of Punjab where these people are not much educated.
- The data was collected only from the religious scholars and cannot be generalized on other people. The same variables can be measured with different population such as government employees or old age people etc.
- The scales used in this study were developed on the basis of data collected from western community. Although these scales were

translated in Urdu but the indigenous scales can also be used for better results.

- In this study only quantitative method was used. Qualitative method can also be used to measure these variables in more depth.

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