

Research Paper**Correlation of Social Support and Religious Orientation With Life Satisfaction in the Elderly**Khodamorad Momeni¹, *Zahra Rafiee¹

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**Citation:** Momeni Kh, Rafiee Z. [Relationship Between Social Support and Religious Considering With Life Satisfaction in Elderly (Persian)]. Iranian Journal of Ageing. 2018; 13(1):50-61. <https://doi.org/10.21859/SIJA.13.1.50>**doi:** <https://doi.org/10.21859/SIJA.13.1.50>

Received: 15 Jul. 2017

Accepted: 03 Dec. 2017

ABSTRACT**Objectives** Population is an ever-increasing phenomenon. During old age, the declining social relationships impact the lifestyle and life satisfaction. The present study investigated the correlation between social support/religious orientation and life satisfaction among the elderly.**Methods & Materials** The present study was descriptive and correlational. The subjects included Kermanshah elderly nursing home residents in 2016. The cohort comprised of 126 elderlies (mean 69.76 and standard deviation 9), who were chosen by convenience sampling. The instruments used in this study included the social support appraisal scale, religious orientation scale, and the satisfaction with life scale. Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) were used for data analysis.**Results** A significant correlation was established between religious orientation and life satisfaction ($P < 0.05$). Also, a correlation was observed between external religious orientation and life satisfaction 0.077, while that between internal religious orientation and life satisfaction was 0.249 ($P < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient between the internal religious orientation and social support was 0.708, while that between the external religious orientation and social support was 0.374 ($P < 0.05$). However, no correlation was established between social support and life satisfaction. Also, internal religious orientation, external religious orientation, and social support could predict the variance of life satisfaction ($R^2 = 11\%$).**Conclusion** Considering the need of the elderly to be supported by their relatives, the increase in social support and adherence to religious orientation could efficiently improve their life satisfaction.**Key words:**

The elderly, Religious orientation, Social support, Life satisfaction

Extended Abstract**1. Objective**

The increasing population of elderly in Iran has drawn attention to the new issues related to them; for example, social support. It is a social network providing psychological and tangible resources for individuals to be able to deal with stressful living conditions and daily issues. As the old age disabilities

become common with increasing age and occasionally inevitable dependence, the role of social support in such circumstances is highlighted in improving the life satisfaction in the elderly. One of the interpersonal aspects effective on mental health is religion. Successful aging is a good model of aging in connection with the religious orientation [2]. Since social dimension of health is the most controversial aspect of health, the current study aimed to investigate the relationship between social support/religious orientation and life satisfaction in the elderly.

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2. Methods and Materials

The present study is applied research and correlational study using the descriptive method. The statistical population of the present study included all individuals aged 60 years and older residents of the Kermanshah nursing home in 2016; the cohort consisted of 200 individuals. The sample size based on the Morgan table was 126 (48 males and 78 females) mean (SD)=69.76(9), which was determined by the available sampling method. The inclusion criteria for participation in the study were as follows: informed consent to participate in the research, ability to answer questions physically and psychologically, and residence in the elderly home. On the other hand, exclusion criteria consisted of a very severe mental illness or disorder (dementia, Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, and severe depression) based on the medical records and experience of grief (death of close relatives) in the last 6 months. Therefore, the investigators referred to the relevant center during the weekdays and provided the subjects with questionnaires, after introduction and explanation of research objectives, providing the necessary instructions for the completion of the questionnaires, and obtaining written consent from the elderly. The current study was approved by the Razi University of Kermanshah.

The questionnaires used in this study included social support questionnaire (Philips et al., 1976) that consisted of 23 questions to measure the social support. In the study by Khabbaz et al. (2011) [32], the calculated alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was 0.74. Social Support Questionnaire [34] and Satisfaction With Life Scale [34] were used to assess the level of individuals' satisfaction; it contained five propositions. The reliability of this questionnaire using test-retest method was 0.82 and that using Cronbach's alpha was 0.87. The Religious Orientation Questionnaire, containing 21 questions, by Allport and Ro (1967) [27] was used to measure the internal and external religious orientations. The internal consistency of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha was 0.71, and the retest reliability was 0.74. Pearson's correlation coefficient, simultaneous regression analysis, and SPSS software were used for data analysis.

3. Results

Descriptive findings showed that the mean of the external religious orientation (40.40) was higher than that of the inner religious orientation (26.83) for the variable of religious orientation. On the other hand, life

satisfaction with the mean of 23.50 in the subjects was higher than the average score of 20, and the mean of social support in the subjects was 18/48. Therefore, the social support can be considered as excellent. In the social support components, family support component had a higher mean (6.74) than friends' support (5.93) as well as that of the others (5.81).

These results indicated a significant relationship between one of the components of religious orientation and life satisfaction ($P < 0.05$). In other words, the correlation coefficient was 0.249 between internal orientations and life satisfaction; since the correlation coefficient was positive, it can be speculated that the life satisfaction was raised by increasing the inner religious orientation. However, no significant relationship was established between the external religious orientations and life satisfaction. The correlation coefficient between these two variables was 0.77. In addition, the results also showed a significant positive correlation between the religious orientation and social support (0.708, $P < 0.05$). Thus, the social support in subjects was increased with increasing religious orientation. Furthermore, the relationship between the external religious orientation and social support was 0.374 at $P < 0.05$ level, which led to the conclusion that social support in subjects was increased with increasing religious orientation. However, no significant relationship was observed between social support and life satisfaction.

The results of regression test showed that inner religious orientation, external religious orientation, and social support could predict the variability of life satisfaction. $R^2 = 0.11$ potentiated that these variables could significantly predict 11% of the changes in life satisfaction. In the coefficient equation, it was found that $B = 0.562$ as obtained in the internal religious orientation variable; this phenomenon showed that 1 unit increase in the internal religious orientation variable led to 0.562 unit increase in the life satisfaction variable. In social support, $B = 0.546$ showed that with 1 unit increase in social support, life satisfaction increased by 0.546.

4. Conclusion

Due to the experiences of life, elderly are part of the capital of a community, and therefore, addressing their mental and physical needs is essential for the society. However, paying attention to the growth of life satisfaction of the elderly firstly requires investigating the relationship between religious orientation and social support. The results of the present study showed that religious orientation and social support were able to

predict life satisfaction. Therefore, for attaining life satisfaction, increasing the life satisfaction of the elderly could be optimally achieved by holding group religious and fun ceremonies, as participation in such activities has been recognized as one of the sources of social support, in addition to providing spiritual dimension. Thus, altogether, the effective steps can be taken by increasing the adherence of the elderly to religious orientation and providing space for religious ceremonies in order to improve their satisfaction with life.

Acknowledgments

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.