

Extended Abstract

**The Relationship between Attribution Styles and Religious
Tendency of University Students**

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Introduction

Religion as a set of musts and must not, beliefs and generalized specific values is accounted very vital for most effective psychological support and is able to save a person from suspension and meaninglessness by providing explanatory support (Bahrami-Ehsan, 1999). So, the role of religion is important in supporting human beings and providing psychological tools for coping and adaptation in daily life events (such as changes, loss and death) (Levin, 1994). On the other hand, the concept of attribution style is a way of explaining daily life events, particularly in stressful situations which could play an important role in mental health (Terry, 1994). The purpose of attribution style theory is to investigate how causal explanation and how people answer questions beginning with why. So, attribution style theory explains events and emotional and behavioral consequences (Rothman, Salvoverg, Turvey, & Fishkin, 1993).

Much research has been done in the field of relationship between religious tendency and attribution style and it is said that the relation between religion and optimism has a long and strong history in social sciences (Mattis, Fontenot, & Hatcher-Kay, 2003). In this study, the relationship between two variables, religious tendency and attribution style, was investigated to determine whether these variables have a

significant relation with each other. This research examined the effect of some demographic characteristics on religious tendency and attribution style that can be helpful for further researches.

Research method

The present study is a descriptive research and a kind of survey study. Participants included 394 Guilan University students (252 females and 142 males, first year to fourth year) answering questionnaires of research. Cluster random sampling method was used for selection of sample and the data was collected using two questionnaires named as Allport religious orientation and Seligman attribution style. Allport religious orientation questionnaire was used to determine external and internal tendency and Seligman attribution style questionnaire measures three dimensions of external-internal, stable-instable and global-specific attribution style after positive and negative events (success and failure). Also Pearson correlation coefficient, t- test and ANOVA were used for data analysis.

Results

The data analysis showed a positive significant relationship between religious tendencies and more stability (after success) and more instability attribution style (after failure) ($P < 0.05$). The findings showed that religious tendencies in females were more than males ($P < 0.01$). In addition, attribution style in females were more external (after success) ($P < 0.05$) and more global (after failure) than males ($P < 0.01$). The results of correlation also showed no significant relationship between age and religious tendencies and attribution styles. Results also showed no significant differences between religious tendencies and attribution styles in married and single subjects; results also indicated that religious tendencies and attribution styles were not significant among different university entrance years. Also according to findings, religious tendencies and attribution styles were not significantly different among different fields of study.

Discussion

According to the results of this study, with increasing religious tendency there will be more stability attribution style in positive events but it does not have a significant relationship to external-internal and global-specific attribution styles. Previous studies have been conducted in field relationship between religious tendency and optimism (internal, stable and global attribution style in positive events and external, instable and specific attribution style in negative events). This result is in accordance with the results of researchers' findings that showed a positive relationship between optimism and spirituality (Mattis, et al., 2003; Sethi, & Seligman, 1993; Treadway, 1996). Thus religious tendency can be effective in reform of attribution styles and formation of adaptive attribution styles and development and deepening of mental health.

The results showed that females have significant religious tendency more than males and attribution styles in females are more external in positive events and more global in negative events than males. Mousavi (2004)'s study indicated that attribution style in females university students are more internal in positive and more global in negative events than males. Also Ahadi (1995) showed that attribution style in females is more internal, stable and global after failure. In our society, these results may happen because of religious values in females to be replaced with social support whereas males usually provide this support from other sources during life. Also difference between male and female in attribution styles may be related to social tendencies due to different expectation of gender. Thus, it seems that these differences can be interpreted by some factors such as individual, cultural and situational differences and self-concept. The results also showed no significant differences between religious tendencies and attribution styles in married and single subjects. This result is coordinated to research findings of Roghanchi (2005) but is inconsistent with research of Sargolzari, et al (2000) which indicated that married people have significantly more religious tendency than singles. In this study the number of married people is

lower than singles (5- 95%), so, a firm conclusion cannot be provided. The results also showed that no significant relationship existed between age and religious tendencies and attribution styles. This result could be due to the fact that the students are almost in the same age group (young); religious tendency and attribution style do not differ much among this group.

According to the findings, religious tendencies and attribution styles were not significant among different university entrance years and among different fields of study. Khodapanahi, et al (2001) indicated that the senior students had more tendency to religion than the first year students had. Further studies for this contradiction should be conducted. Also Mousavi (2004) in line with this study showed that attribution styles were not significant among different university entrance years. This result can be explained in three ways: similar feeling from groups of student during the academic years, no difference in the enjoyment of social scores during the academic years and similarity in problems during the academic years.

Keywords: Religious tendency, Attribution styles.