

Investigating the effects of emotional maturity and self--discrepancy on the religious attitude of pre-college adolescent girls in Tehran

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Achieve to emotional maturity and lack of self-discrepancy is important factors in people's religious attitudes. So the aim this study is Investigating the effects of emotional maturity and self--discrepancy on the religious attitude of pre-college adolescent girls in Tehran

Methods: The research method is descriptive and correctional. statistical population consists of all pre-college student girls in Tehran. 405 students were selected using Morgan table and multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data collection tools were emotional maturity questionnaire, self-discrepancy questionnaire and religious attitude questionnaire. Collected data has been analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. All ethical issues were observed. Moreover, the authors did not report conflict of interest.

Results: This study Investigated that emotional maturity and self-discrepancy variables determined religious attitudes with a factor of 0.10. The emotional maturity factor (beta-0.31) has the greatest impact on religious attitudes ($p < 0.01$), and real-ideal self-discrepancy with beta 0.11 is the second factor influencing religious attitude in adolescent girls ($p < 0.05$). In this explanation, real-ought self discrepancy had no significant effect on the religious attitude ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion: The results showed that emotional maturity and self-discrepancy variables play important role in the religious attitude of adolescent girls. Therefore these variables must be considered to promote their religion, and field of necessary education to students such as life skills training should be provided to improve emotional maturity and self-discrepancy.

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Summary

Background and Objectives: Reaching emotional maturity and lack of self-discrepancy are considered as important factors in individuals' religious attitude. This study investigated the effects of emotional maturity and self-discrepancy on religious attitude among pre-college female students in Tehran, Iran.

Emotional maturity has several dimensions including control of emotions and feelings, acceptance of responsibility, avoiding impulsive behavior, patience, openness to criticism, and the ability to control anger. Religion or religious orientation is one of the

influential factors in shaping individuals' nature and type of thought and behavior, and it may cover patience, resisting carnal desires, optimism, empathy, adjustment, honesty, accepting responsibility, pardon, forgiveness, and emotional regulations (1). Past research has indicated relationships between religious attitude and emotional maturity and mental health (2-6). In addition, religious beliefs could increase self-confidence and relieve stress (3). Adolescence brings about many changes such as the inconsistency of self as well as major physiological and psychological changes, causing some adolescents to experience self-discrepancy. Self-discrepancy is a variable for behavior self-evaluation and a guide to an individual's self-

regulation (7-9). The empirical evidence suggests that the more the ideal self is adapted to the actual self, the better the mental health. All aspects of self-discrepancy, such as the actual self, the ideal self, and the ought self, are consistent with one another (9). Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effects of emotional maturity and self-discrepancy on religious attitude among pre-college adolescent girls in Tehran.

Method: The study was descriptive–correlational in design. The population included all the pre-college female students in Tehran, Iran during the academic year 2015-2016. From among the population ($N = 100000$), a sample of 405 students were selected using multi-stage cluster sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan's table while considering the inclusion criteria (i.e., being a pre-college student and having no psychological or physical disorders) and the exclusion criteria (i.e., being a student in other grades of high school and having psychological or physical disorders). The data were collected using *Emotional Maturity Scale*, *Self-discrepancy Questionnaire*, and *Religious Attitude Questionnaire*. For the data collection, first, Tehran was divided into five educational regions: north, south, west, east, and center. The second step involved a random selection of two schools in each of the five regions. Then, the questionnaires were given to all the target students in the selected schools.

Emotional Maturity Scale: This questionnaire was developed by Singh and Bhargava (1991). It has 48 items and five sub-scales including emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, and lack of independence. The scoring was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*), with the higher score indicating a lower level of emotional maturity. The interpretation of the total score on the questionnaire was as follows: 50-80 = very stable, 81-88 = fairly stable, 89-106 = unstable, and 107-240 = very unstable. The test-retest reliability index for the scale has been estimated to be 0.75.

Self-discrepancy Questionnaire: This questionnaire was revised based on Higgins et al.'s selves theory (21) and Sadeghzadeh's study (22). It has 27 items, each of which has been presented once for the actual self, once for the ideal self, and once for the ought self. The scoring was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). The test-retest reliability index for the questionnaire has been estimated to be 0.87.

Religious Attitude Questionnaire: This 40-item questionnaire was developed by Khodayarrifard et al. (24). The scoring was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*); the maximum and minimum possible scores were, respectively, 40 and 200, with the mean score being 120. The test-retest reliability index for the questionnaire has been estimated to be .89. The data were analyzed through correlation and regression.

Results: The results of the regression analysis showed a significant correlation with respect to the variables of

the study ($R = .31$). According to the obtained coefficient of determination (R^2), 10% of the variance in the religious attitude scores were, therefore, predicted by the emotional maturity and self-discrepancy scores. Emotional maturity had the greatest impact on religious attitude ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < .01$), and actual-ideal self-discrepancy was the second influential factor in religious attitude ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < .05$). The third factor, actual-ought self-discrepancy, had no significant effect on religious attitude ($\beta = -0.09$, $p > .05$).

Conclusion: The results showed that emotional maturity and self-discrepancy could play an important role in religious attitude among adolescent girls. This finding was consistent with those obtained in previous studies (13-16). Researchers have revealed positive relationships between religious attitude and emotional self-regulation (13), resiliency (14), high self-esteem (15), and low stress (16). In addition, emotional maturity is related to the control of anger, and this psychological component is also directly associated with religious attitude (17).

In addition, the present study showed that a higher level of self-discrepancy could lead to a gap between the ideal self and the actual self. Researchers have shown that a large gap between these two aspects of selves could result in depression and melancholy (18, 19). Moreover, past research has indicated that religious attitude is related to mental health (20) and self-actualization (21). However, the results revealed no significant relationship between the sub-scales of the ought self-discrepancy and religious attitude.

In sum, self-discrepancy and emotional maturity had a dual relationship with religious attitude. It could be concluded that variables such as emotional maturity and self-discrepancy should receive attention in order to promote religious attitude among adolescents, and students should be offered necessary training, such as life skills training, for enhancing their emotional maturity and self-discrepancy. This study had a number of limitations. For instance, the findings were restricted to female students in Tehran; further studies could, thus, be conducted among boys and in other contexts. In addition, the data were collected using questionnaires, and observation and interview were not utilized.

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