

Investigating the relationship of self-esteem and spirituality to homesickness among dormitory students of Razi University in Kermanshah

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Abstract

Background and Objective: University is considered a positive opportunity for personal development; however, students often face challenges when they are at university. Homesickness is among the most frequently reported concerns of dormitory students. This study aimed to investigate the relationship of self-esteem and spirituality to homesickness among dormitory students of Razi University in Kermanshah, Iran in 1395.

Method: The study is descriptive and correlational. All female and male students who were living in dormitories of Razi University in school year of 94-95 formed the statistical population. 322 of them were selected based on Morgan table, using multi-stage cluster sampling. Research instruments were self-concept questionnaire (1976), spirituality questionnaire by Corp and Downing (2009), and homesickness questionnaire by Archer (1998). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient, and regression. In this study, all ethical issues were carefully observed and the authors declare no conflict of interest.

Results: The results showed that there is a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and homesickness ($p < .01$); also spirituality and homesickness ($p < .001$). Data analysis also demonstrated that spirituality can predict the extent of homesickness among university students living in dormitories ($p < .001$).

Conclusion: According to the findings of this research, spirituality and self-esteem can be perceived as complementary tools to reduce homesickness. It seems that when dealing with homesickness, these two variables should be taken into account.

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Summary

Background and Objectives: Entering university is considered a great opportunity for personal development; however, students often face challenges when they are living at university (1). Long distances, changes in life conditions, and ending previous social relations are among more complex challenges for dormitory students (2). To students who have strong emotional bonds with their city, dormitory life is a threat to their security and identity, making

homesickness one of the most common concerns expressed among them (2). Homesickness is a complex situation which includes negative emotional, cognitive, and motivational feelings toward home as well as leaving family, friends, and culture (3). Homesickness can also be regarded as a mild grief when grief causes trouble adapting to student life (4) Dormitory students feel the grief of losing family and home where they live so that they have the desire to return home; as a result, they simultaneously experience depression, psychosomatic symptoms, and physical complaints (5). Homesickness can be very painful especially when it is

combined with mood and anxiety disorders, which gives rise to many problems (6). When compared to other students, those who experience homesickness are more likely to become socially isolated (7), and vulnerable to depression, drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, and difficulty in adaptation (5). Given that, since self-esteem is the assessment of one's own and includes emotional and cognitive components (8), it can be taken into account when discussing students' homesickness. This has not received much attention in the past studies. However, studies in recent years have shown the relationship between spirituality and psychological issues and also its positive impact on mental health (9, 10). It seems that people who are more religious are less likely to experience separation anxiety (11) and their spiritual beliefs bring about feelings of purpose and self-confidence to their lives (12). Nevertheless, no study has examined the relationship between self-esteem and spirituality to students' homesickness. Furthermore, lack of studies investigating the relationship between self-esteem and homesickness is evident in the related literature. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and spirituality to homesickness among dormitory students of Razi University of Kermanshah in 1395.

Method: This study was descriptive and correlational. The population consisted of male and female dormitory students of Razi University in Kermanshah, which included about 3,500 students in academic year of 94-95. 322 students were selected based on Morgan table, using multi-stage cluster sampling. Inclusion criteria consisted of student' consent to participate in the study and exclusion criteria were non-resident dorm room and incomplete or corrupted questionnaire. To preserve confidentiality and professional ethics, questionnaires were distributed without having to write the name of the participants. These questionnaires explained the purpose of the study to the participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient, and regression.

Self-concept questionnaire was designed in 1976 by Cooper Smith. It has four subscales, namely public measures (26 items), family (8 items), social (8 items), career - educational (8 items), and lie scale (Article 8). Total score can be achieved by adding the scores of the four subscales of self-esteem. Lie subscale scores will not be considered in total score. The validity of this scale is 0/69 for boys and 0/71 for girls (24).

Homesickness questionnaire was developed in 1998 by Archer and colleagues to assess students' homesickness and has 33 items and two subscales of attachment to home and dissatisfaction of being involved in university. According to the results of statistical analyses, three questions were deleted in the Iranian version of the questionnaire and the final version has 30 questions, 15 phrases covering each subscale. Scoring is done in reverse order in terms of 4, 9, 15, and 30. The reliability for five dimensions of homesick for the family, desire to return home, adaptability, loneliness, and longing for familiar people and the

environment were 0/90, 0/89, 0/85, 0/84, and 0/69, respectively (28).

Spirituality questionnaire is developed by the Persians and Downing in 2009 to measure the importance of spirituality and its dimensions in people's lives. The participants were supposed to identify their agreement or disagreement on a four-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree =1 to strongly agree =4). In addition, the questionnaire had two open questions about the definition of spirituality and the effect of spirituality on health and well-being which can be used or deleted. The overall alpha coefficient of questionnaire was 94%.

Results: The results showed that the self-esteem of the total ($r = -0/13$), general self-esteem ($r = -0/13$), social self-esteem ($r = -0/10$), total Spirituality ($r = -0/27$) and their subscales of self-awareness ($r = -0/26$), and spiritual activities ($r = -0/15$), there are significant correlations with homesickness. The results of regression analysis showed that the coefficient of self-esteem and spirituality were $-0/01$ and $-0/26$, respectively. Moreover, self-esteem and spirituality together accounted for 0/7 of the variance in students' homesickness.

Conclusion: The results of this study showed that self-esteem and spirituality have a significant relationship to homesickness among dormitory students and they can predict homesickness. It seems that people who have higher self-esteem and spirituality have higher emotional stability and less feelings of depression and loneliness, being capable of providing more for their friendship and supporting networks. Thus, they are less likely to experience homesickness. The fact that spirituality is to create harmony and consistency with oneself and the world can help people communicate with others resulting in higher spirituality, social connection with others, and subsequently less homesickness. Spirituality can be a support against the pressures of being away from home and family function so that it reduces students' homesickness as a source of mental health support, especially for people who have few social supports and personal resources. In general, we can say that spirituality can be effective when dealing with psychological and environmental pressures in three ways: (A) spirituality can be used as a part of coping process and the evaluation of the threat (B) intervening in the coping process, making it helpful, and (C) redefining the problem to be solved. In conclusion, spirituality and self-esteem can be regarded as complementary tools to reduce homesickness. It seems that when dealing with homesickness, these two variables should be taken into account.

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