

The Relationship between Spirituality and Demographic Factors among Students Living in Dormitory of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences

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Article Info

Received: Jan 9, 2017

Received in revised form:

Apr 9, 2017

Accepted: Jul 6, 2017

Available Online: Apr 6, 2017

Keywords:

Demographic factors

Spirituality

University students

Abstract

Background and Objective: Spirituality is a global phenomenon which recognizes human as a whole and his connection to a Supreme Being as a reason to live and to find meaning and purpose. Students of medical sciences are a large part of health care providers all over the world, and the quality of their services is directly associated with the effectiveness of the health system. Having said that, this study was conducted to determine the level of spirituality and its related factors among students of Shahid Beheshti University of medical sciences.

Method: The present study is a descriptive-analytical one conducted on 540 female and male students residing in dormitories of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. Multistage random sampling was used. The inclusion criterion was students' consent to participate in the study. The data were gathered through two questionnaires, namely Demographic Factors Questionnaire and Spirituality Assessment Questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by T-test and one-way analysis of variance. In this study, the ethical issues were all considered and the authors declared no conflict of interest.

Results: The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between some demographic variables (economic status and academic year of students) and spirituality as well as spiritual attitude. Besides, variables of marital status, faculty, economic status, and academic year significantly correlate with spiritual ability.

Conclusion: To promote spirituality of university students, cultural values should be designed and implemented more effectively. Moreover, faculty members need to be selected more carefully because spiritual professors have the ability to revolutionize their students.

Please cite this article as: Rakhshanderou S, Ghaffari M. The Relationship between Spirituality and Demographic Factors among Students Living in Dormitory of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. J Res Relig Health. 2017; 3(4): 78- 88.

Summary

Background and Objectives: Spirituality is a global phenomenon which recognizes human as a whole and his connection to a Supreme Being as a reason to live and to find meaning and purpose (1). Spiritual communication with a boundless power ensures an individual that a strong power always supports him (2). In fact, spirituality in life reduces the level of negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, ultimately lowering the risk of mental illness (3). Students are the future makers, assuming different

roles in the community. Students of medical sciences are a large part of health care providers all over the world, and the quality of their services is directly associated with the effectiveness of the health system. Given the fact that these individuals will be faced with more stress in their future careers compared to others, spirituality can help them cope with stressful work environments. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the level of spirituality and its related factors among students of Shahid Beheshti University of medical sciences.

Method: This research is a descriptive-analytical study which was conducted on 540 female and male students residing in dormitories of Shahid Beheshti University

of Medical Sciences. Multistage random sampling method was used in a way that female and male dormitories were regarded as two categories so that two clusters were selected from each category and samples were randomly selected from each cluster. The inclusion criterion was students' consent to participate in the study and the exclusion criteria was their refusal to complete the questionnaire. The data were collected by questionnaires consisting of demographic factors and spirituality assessment. The collected data were then analyzed by T-test, chi squared, one-way analysis of variance, and correlation.

Voluntary participation in the study, informed consent, confidentiality of information, anonymity of questionnaires, and protecting the research team's rights are the ethical and moral considerations which were taken into account in this study.

Results: 42.6% (n=229) of participants were male and 57.4% (n=308) were female. Age average of participants in the study was 22.61 ± 3.05 . 64.6% of participants were associated with faculties of Basic Sciences and 35.4% with Clinical faculties. The majority of participants (65.2%) were doing a bachelor degree and 34.8% were master's and PhD students. 10.6% were freshmen, 13.8% were sophomores, 22.9% were juniors, 21.2% were seniors, and 31.5% were in their fifth year of university.

Results showed that age, gender, school or faculty, level of education, and marital status had no significant relationship with spirituality. Mean and standard deviation of spirituality were reported 105.84 and 22.21 respectively among students with average economic status; 118.48 and 21.09 among students with good economic status; and 119.53 and 21.85 among students with excellent economic status. The obtained results indicated a significant relation between economic status, academic years and spirituality.

Among demographic factors, gender, faculty, age, education level, and marital status had no significant relationship with religious attitude. The obtained mean and standard deviation of spiritual attitude were 59.04 and 13.64 respectively among students with average economic status, to 33.14 and 11.99 among students with good economic status, and to 66.79 and 12.34 among students with excellent economic status. Mean and standard deviation of spiritual attitude obtained to 71.33 and 12.04, respectively among freshmen, to 63.65 and 12.09 among sophomores, to 66.06 and 12.20 among juniors, to 66.89 and 11.29 among seniors, and to 63.63 and 13.02 among students at fifth academic year.

Mean and standard deviation of spiritual ability were 50.44 and 10.85, respectively among students educating in Clinical faculties, and 52.68 and 10.47 among students doing a degree in Basic Sciences. There was a significant difference between spiritual ability of students educating in Clinical faculties and Basic Sciences. Moreover, mean and standard deviation of spiritual ability were 54.73 and 11.23 respectively among married students and 51.45 and 10.50 among single students. Results showed a

significant difference between spiritual ability of married and single students. In addition, mean and standard deviation of spiritual ability were 46.80 and 10.72 respectively among students with average economic status, 52.25 and 10.31 among students with good economic status, and finally 52.70 and 10.87 among students with excellent economic status. It is worth noting that mean and standard deviation of spiritual ability were reported 55.79 and 9.64, respectively among freshmen, 48.43 and 11.11 among sophomores, 51.89 and 11.14 among juniors, 52.74 and 9.63 among seniors, and 51.48 and 10.65 among students of the fifth academic year. There was a significant relationship between economic status, academic year, and spiritual ability. Among demographic factors, age, gender, and education level had no significant relationship with spiritual ability.

Conclusion: According to the findings discussed above, the most important demographic factors are economic status and academic year. The role of spirituality has not been addressed among students who are the major human resources of the country in Iran, a religious country with huge spiritual and mystical Islamic treasures. The effect of spirituality on promoting the quality of higher education has not been appropriately examined despite the fact that university reflects the amount of progress as well as the promotion of human capital in the country. Therefore, researchers and students are recommended that they should delve into this significant subject. Furthermore, cultural values must be designed and implemented more effectively in order for these interventions to take effect on fostering students' spirituality level. Thus, faculty members should be selected meticulously because spiritual professors have the ability to revolutionize their students. Universities need professors who are of great integrity and attend their classes with their whole being.

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