Relationship between religious orientation and components of emotional intelligence among medical students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Religious orientation (internal and external) is one of the factors influencing behavior and cognition and plays a decisive role in the components of emotional intelligence. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between religious orientation and components of emotional intelligence among medical students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Method: The method of this research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of this study consists of all medical students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (academic year 2016 – 2017). Simple random sampling was used for selecting the participants. More specifically, the sample size consisted of 63 students (32 females and 31 males) who were randomly selected from among all students of the faculty of medicine. The data collection tool was Alport Religious Orientation (ROS) questionnaire and Bar-EQ Intelligence Questionnaire (EQ-I). Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods (mean and standard deviation) and regression analysis. In this research, confidentiality and all ethical principles were respected. Also, the authors of the article have not reported any conflicts of interest.

Results: In total, 51% of the respondents were females, while 49% were males. Also, 31.7% of the research population was in the age group of 18 to 20 years old, 52.4% had an age range of 21 to 23 years and 15.9% were 24-29 years old. Approximately, 93.7% of the participants were single, whereas 6.3% were married. The findings indicate that external and internal religious orientation has a significant effect on the components of emotional intelligence at the level of 5%. The findings showed that students' religious orientation can significantly predict 19% of the components of emotional intelligence.

Conclusion: The results of this study showed that religious orientation can play an effective role in predicting students' emotional intelligence. Students with stronger religious orientation are more flexible, more tolerant while facing stressful situations and generally happier. They also consider themselves more accountable in social situations.

Summary

Background and Objective: Students are one of the most important and dynamic segments of the society and typically are in the age range of 18 to 24. They face a variety of new experiences when they enter the university (1). The incidence of public health disorders among students of advanced countries is 10% to 12%. Such disorders constitute one of the major causes of students' dismissal, academic failure and dropouts (2). In the study of Yusufi et al. (2014), 40.2% of students

of medical sciences suffered from mental health problems (3). Sorkh Kelayee et al. (2011) also demonstrated that 47.75% of students of medical sciences of Tehran suffered from mental disorders and depression (4). The high prevalence of mental disorders in medical students, who are intellectual resources and the future-makers of our country, severely decreases their learning capability and educational efficiency and changes their mental health's situation (5). In connection with the mental health of students, the phenomenon of "Emotional Intelligence" is one of the most important social concepts, which is being investigated by psychologists, sociologists and religious therapists. The concept of emotional intelligence was initially introduced by Mayer and Salovey (1990) (6). Research shows that, in total, 20% of successes in life are explained by intelligence quotient (IQ), while the rest (80%) are accounted for by emotional intelligence (7).

Pele Vorzadeh et al. (2015) and Arfaee, Hosseinzadeh et al. (2015) have demonstrated the predictive role of religious orientation in students' emotional intelligence (8 – 9). The existing studies show the lack of a coherent body of research on the role of religious orientation in the components of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, to date, no study has focused on this subject in Iran. As a result, the main goal in this study is to investigate the relationship between religious orientation and the components of emotional intelligence among students of medical Sciences at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Method: The method of this research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of this study was all medical students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences who were studying in the academic year 2016 – 2017. Simple random sampling was used for selecting the participants. More specifically, the sample size consisted of 63 students (32 females and 31 males) who were randomly selected from among all students of the faculty of medicine. Inclusion criteria in this research were: medical student of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, academic year 2016-2017, a minimum age of 18 and maximum of 30 years, informed consent and willingness to participate in the research, absence of psychiatric disorders (depression, Anxiety, bipolarity, etc.), drug dependence and abuse. The exclusion criterion for the study was submitting an incomplete questionnaire.

The instruments that were used for data collection included:

A) The Check-List of demographic feature:
This questionnaire collected personal information including age, gender, level of education, marital status, a history of physical and mental illnesses, and alcohol and other addictive substances consumption history.

B) The questionnaire of emotional intelligence:
The questionnaire was created by Bar-on (1980), who validated the instrument by collecting data from 3831 participants from six countries. The questionnaire

consists of 117 questions and 15 scales, including problem solving, happiness, independence, stress management, self-actualization, emotional self-consciousness, realism, interpersonal relationships, optimism, self-respect, self-esteem or impulsive control, flexibility, social responsibility and empathy. The questions in this test are graded in a 5-point Likert scale (1-5). It has been demonstrated that this instrument enjoys acceptable reliability and validity indices (10).

C) The questionnaire of religious orientation:
This scale was created by Allport and Ross (1967) to measure internal and external religious orientation. This questionnaire has 20 questions, with 11 items allocated to measuring external religious orientation, and 9 items devoted to assessing internal religious orientation. The test questions are scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from one to four. The results of various studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of this questionnaire (1).

Results: In total, 51% of the respondents were females, while 49% were males. Also, 31.7% of the research population was in the age group of 18 to 20 years old, 52.4% had an age range of 21 to 23 years and 15.9% were 24-29 years old. Approximately, 93.7% of the participants were single, whereas 6.3% were married. The findings indicate that external and internal religious orientation has a significant effect on the components of emotional intelligence at the level of 5%. The findings showed that students' religious orientation can significantly predict 19% of the components of emotional intelligence.

Conclusion: The present study was performed with the aim of investigating the relationship between the religious orientation and the components of emotional intelligence among medical students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. The findings showed that religious orientation has a significant impact on the components of emotional intelligence. In fact, external and internal religious orientations had a meaningful impact on the components of emotional intelligence at the level of 5%. The correlation coefficient value in the present study was 0.19, meaning that 19% of the variance in the components of emotional intelligence among the selected participants could be accounted for by religious orientations. In explaining the findings of this study, religious beliefs and religious motives of students can be considered as significant predictors of psychological adjustment. Both external and internal religious orientations form students' perceptions of the outside world and affect their interpretations of life events; thus, religious orientation plays a significant role in the lifestyle of individuals, strategies for coping with internal and external events, and adopted procedures for managing stress and psychological problems (12).

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