

DEATH ANXIETY AND RELIGION/S

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Abstract

The relationship between death anxiety and religion/s explored, it was assumed that the role of religion could be associated with death anxiety in a fixed manner or it could vary. Following tests were used Death Anxiety Scale, Daily Experience Spirituality Scale and Centrality of Religiosity Scale. 100 subjects falling between 40-60 years of age belonging to similar area and followers of two different religions, 50 belonging to religion one in Group-A and 50 belonging to religion two in Group-B were tested. The results reflected that religiosity was significantly and positively correlated with faith ($p < .01$), negatively associated with death anxiety ($p < .01$) and negatively correlated with death anxiety ($p < .01$). The revealing finding that came in light was the significant differences of religiosity, faith and death anxiety between Religion-A and Religion-B. It was also observed that faith was significantly higher among Religion-A respondents as compared to Religion-B respondents. Finding suggests further explorations in the direction to explore and address an inevitable part of human presence.

Introduction

Many religions are present in the world. Religions are part of human history since (500–300 BCE) (Baumard & Chevallier, 2015). Some religions are more known in South Asia, some in East Asia and some in Middle East (Noss & Grangaard, 2017). Religion provides information about God, psychological feel about divinity as well as social and cultural contexts (Gunn, 2003). Religions extend ‘prosociality’ and discuss subjects like belief in supernatural justice, altruism, self-regulations, ‘sociosexuality’ directives and many other such matters. Most of the religious condemn ‘fast’ behaviors like selfishness, materialism etc. (Baumard & Chevallier, 2015)

Death” is the unequivocal and permanent end of our existence” (Nagel, 1970) that is an inevitable part of human life. Religions of the world discuss this subject, many scientists, psychologists and philosophers are known for their ideas and comments about religion (Feifel, 1959). Lonetto & Templer (1986) have elaborated the subject and also discussed that how death is related with anxiety and how death anxiety is different than that of other kinds of anxiety and what role death anxiety plays in human life? Metcalf & Huntington (1991) have pointed out various celebrations offered in various religions as well as various rituals present in various religions in cultural context. All these are related with death and are present in various human societies. Rossouw (2002) has discussed various situations those are related with death, some of these are related with dignity and death. Kübler-Ross (1973) has commented on death and dying. Houlbrooke (2019) has discussed death and related rituals in historic perspective and has described death and dying with various expressions of grief in death bed situations and has also pointed out that how religion beliefs influence these situations. Explanations about different kinds of deaths and different ways by which people approach death and different approaches those are related with death experiences have also been reported in various studies (Leming & Dickinson, 2020). Death anxiety is related with religious beliefs (Jong & Halberstadt, 2019). Byrne & Morgan (2019) have pointed out the relationship of death anxiety with religion and elaborated that how its influences hope levels?

Stress is a commonly known feature related with death anxiety. Stress was found to be related more commonly with death anxiety in case of chronic disease. Context studies found relationship with multiple sclerosis (Abdollahi, Panahipour, Allen & Hosseinian, 2019) among elderly people (Bakan, Arli & Yıldız, 2019), in breast cancer (Bahrami & Behbahani, 2019), active crohn's disease (de Campos, et al 2019), acute coronary syndrome (Abu, McManus, Kiefe & Goldberg, 2019), cancer (Ahmad & Gaber, 2019) and congenital heart disease (Moons et al. 2019). Moreover, it has been reported that death anxiety can cause vulnerability for the development of mental illness (Saleem & Saleem, 2019)

Studies reflect the relationship of social development (Maheshwari & Mukherjee, 2019) death anxiety as social detachment was found to be related with it (Maheshwari & Mukherjee, 2019). It has been reported that living alone is related with death anxiety among elderly (Lee, 2019), moreover, death anxiety found to be related with attitudes (Seo & Shin, 2019).

Religion and death anxiety (Marin, 2019) have a relation and religion found to be playing a role in death acceptance (Harding, Flannelly, Weaver & Costa, 2005; Jong & Halberstadt, 2019; Templer, 1972), why is so has been elaborated in various studies (van Bruggen, 2019)? It could be because of the reason that every 8 out of every 10 approximately 84% in the world identify with some faith (Jonathan Jong & Jamin Halberstadt, 2018), therefore, religion is source of meaning and value for people. (Buchak, 2019) and is a kind of knowledge (Hick, 1988) that influences life (Buszka & Ewest, 2020) and influences human life in multiple ways (Abdel-Khalek, 2019) because it is related with emotional regulations (Vishkin et al 2019), well-being and mental health (Hodapp & Zwingmann, 2019). Although a few of its aspects are less explainable in scientific way (Prasad, 2019) yet death and spirituality are related with happiness and happy people (Doka & Morgan, 2016).

Method and Procedure

The universality of death, anxiety related with it and its relationship with religion was convincing to investigate that whether the role of religion is fixed to determine the presence of death anxiety or it varies? To test, the persons belonging to same areas those were following two different religions were treated as subjects and studied as Group-A and Group-B all the subjects were within age group of 40 to 60. Following tests in the following sequence were administered to all of them.

1. Death Anxiety Scale (Templer, 1970a)
2. Daily Experience Spirituality Scale (Underwood, 2011)
3. Centrality of Religiosity Scale (Huber & Huber, 2012)

The study was approved by Riphah Research Ethics Committee. The subjects were allowed to leave the test if they feel inconvenient during tests. They were informed that testing was an academic research and would help the researchers to improve knowledge about various religions. The subjects were informed that there was no right and wrong answers in the entire tests and their all responses would be considered as right. Subjects were also ensured that their personal information would remain confidential and their names would not appear on the data records.

Results

The data analyzed by SPSS revealed correlation among religiosity, faith and death anxiety. It came in light that religiosity was significantly and positively correlated with faith ($r = .37$, $p < .01$) and religiosity was significantly and negatively associated with death anxiety ($r = -.56$, $p < .01$). Faith was also found significantly and negatively correlated with death anxiety ($r = -.81$, $p < .01$). Further a significant differences of religiosity, faith and death anxiety between Religion-A and Religion-B was found and it was observed that faith was significantly higher among Religion-A respondents as compared to Religion-B respondents.

Conclusion and Discussion

An inverse link between faith and death anxiety as well as the difference of level of faith between Group-A and Group-B was found. Prevalence of the different levels of death anxiety reflects that the study of faith

and factors influencing faith could provide information to address an inevitable part of human life the death anxiety. The study evolves a direction to compare various religions/ faiths to work out that how and what elements are responsible and contribute towards the decrease and increase in death anxiety? Such findings could contribute towards better quality of life and can add into human persistent experiences like death anxiety.

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Table 1. 0

Frequency Distribution

Respondent's Characteristics Religion	Respondent's Characteristics Religion-A Religion-B	<i>f (%)</i> 50 (50.0) 50 (50.0)
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The results of this research show that 100 respondents participated, 50 (50%) respondents were Religion-A and 50 (50%) respondents were from Religion-B

Table 1. 1

Correlation among Religiosity, Faith and Death Anxiety (N=100)

	Religiosity	Faith	Faith	Death Anxiety	Death Anxiety
Religiosity	-	-	.37**	.37**	-.56**
Faith			-	-	-.81**
Death Anxiety					-

** $p < .01$

The results of this table presented correlation among religiosity, faith and death anxiety. While, religiosity was significantly and positively correlated with faith ($r = .37$, $p < .01$) and religiosity was significantly and negatively associated with death anxiety ($r = -.56$, $p < .01$). Its mean high score on religiosity increased the level of faith among respondents and more religious person have reported less death related anxiety. Meanwhile, faith was significantly and negatively correlated with death anxiety ($r = -.81$, $p < .01$). That indicated the inversely link between faith and death anxiety.

Table 1.2

Comparison between Religion-A and Religion-B with Independent Sample t-Test among all variables (N=100)

Variable	Group-A (n=50)	Group-A (n=50)	Group-B (n =50)	Group-B (n =50)			95%CI	95%CI
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Religiosity	4.03	.62	3.59	1.02	2.62	.01	.11	.77
Faith	43.58	19.06	35.90	15.76	2.20	.03	.74	14.62
Death Anxiety	10.12	2.12	11.48	1.88	-3.40	.00	-2.15	-.57

The results show the significant differences of religiosity, faith and death anxiety between Religion-A and Religion-B. While, the mean score of religiosity and faith was significantly higher among Religion-A respondents as compared to Religion-B respondents.