

## Predictability of Purposefulness in Life on the Basis of Religious Attitude and Moral Foundations of Payam Noor University Qom Province

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the share of religious attitudes and moral foundations in prediction of purposefulness of life in students. This study is descriptive, and of correlation type which was carried out among 165 undergraduate students of Payam Noor University in Qom in the academic year 2013-2014. The sample was selected by single stage cluster sampling and responded questionnaires of "Serajzadeh religious attitude measurement based on Gluck and Stark model," "Hight and Graham Ethical Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ30)" and "Krambaf and Mahoolik questionnaire of purpose of life". Data of the research were analyzed using spss software and statistical method of correlation coefficient test and multiple regression analysis.

The results showed that there is no significant relationship between purposefulness in life and religious attitudes ( $p>0/05$ ) and also there is no significant relationship between purposefulness in life and moral foundations ( $p>0/05$ ).

**KEYWORDS:** religious attitude, moral foundations, purposefulness.

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### INTRODUCTION

Having aim and meaning in life are of the most important religious, philosophical and psychological subjects which are of mental health signs and increase the abilities of the individual (Cheraghi and Molavi, 2007). Fear of human having no schedule and being purposeless, have prompted prophets, mystics and scholars to make man aware of this issue to get rid of emptiness and give meaning to his life.

Psychologists such as Allport, Lowin, Erick Fromm, Erick Erikson, Jung discussed the purpose and meaning of life and among the Muslim scholars, Ghazali, martyr Motahari and Allameh Jafari have emphasized the issue of purpose in life greatly (Ghadiri and Jan Bozorgi, 2010).

Quality of life related to health is: individual subjective evaluation of his current health status, health care, health promotion activities which cause a level of overall activity and allows one to follow the worthy goals of life (Lehninger, 2007; Naghibi et al, 2013).

However, people, in the selection of goals in life and their attitude toward them, are different based on each individual's perfection and the degree of realizing their goals. The factors associated with choosing suitable solutions for the correct perception of life, are having religious attitudes and vision to life. Some researchers believe that religion, by affecting the lifestyle and how of resolving value conflicts, answers two fundamental questions about the purpose of life and the meaning of man's activities and talents (Beramer, 1993).

Thus, religious behaviors are positive values in addressing the meaningful points of life (Kanimen, 1999). Also Willits & Crider (1988) knew religion effective in the life satisfaction. After the revision of the definition of mental health and proposing issues such as welfare, happiness and spirituality, from early 1970 an experimental-analytical program about spiritual happiness outspread which was effective in encouraging a large group of sociologists and psychologists to the scientific investigation of this crucial aspect. Spiritual happiness includes a life full of certainty in relation to God; findings of researches indicate that spiritual happiness includes a religious, social, and psychological combination (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982). Ellison (1982), called the spiritual happiness as personal satisfaction, he states that the spiritual happiness shows itself via inner peace, compassion for others, respect for life, supportive relationships with other people, realistic orientation about the lack and deprivation, valuable self-concept and moral practices (Kaymia, 2000).

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Another factor in addition to having a religious attitude and vision can facilitate purposefulness in life, is moral foundations. For Jung, ethics means tendencies and intrinsic characteristics and a set of desirable and undesirable, bad or great traits and tendencies and human psyche has them and they are reflected in his behavior, constitute his correct and incorrect behaviors. Accordingly, everyone who has good and decent manner is moral or otherwise immoral (Yung, 1937).

The meaning of life for each individual is unique to himself and one has to discover for himself the meaning of a particular situation (Shultz, 1999). According to Frankel there are three main approaches to find meaning in life; experimental values, creative values and attitude values which are of the surface appearance of something more fundamental that he calls them beyond the meaning or excellence (Frankel, 1995).

According to this point that among the effective factors on life purposefulness, the factor of religious attitude and moral foundations are also important factors, the present study examines the degree of the effect of religious attitude and moral foundations on life purposefulness in students of Qom University.

Many studies have examined the relationship between purposefulness in life and mental illness. The investigation revealed that meaning and purpose in life are reversely related to anxiety, depression, mental confusion, negative affection, transition fear, physical modeling, interpersonal sensitivity, sleep disturbances, hopelessness, compulsive obsession disorder (Zika & Chamberlaine, 1992; Chamberlaine & Zika, 1998; Debats & ets, 1993; Debats, 1990; Harris & ets, 2001; Scannel @ ets ., 2004, quoted by Mascard & ets., 2004).

Also Debats (1996) quoted by Mascard & ets (2004) showed in a research that clients who score higher on tests of life meaning earn better results from psychotherapy, but in the research that Kermani and Danesh (2011) examined the impact of religious attitudes and sensation seeking on marital adjustment of married teachers of Pakdasht Town, the result showed that religious attitudes do not have effect marital adjustment components.

Studies on factors affecting purposefulness, know religiosity as one of the factors affecting purposefulness. The importance of this issue has gone so far that caused religious psychologists to grow researches increasingly on the role of the need for religiosity and the influence of religion on life purposefulness (Bakhshipoor Roodsari et al., 2005; Dabirinejad, 2008; sadeghi et al., 2010; Sahrayian et al, 2011; Aghili & Kumar, 2008).

Also Cheraghi and et al (2009) shows in her study that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and general health (mental, physical). According to the study, someone with strong religious beliefs, do not feel emptiness, hopelessness, and despair and has high self-esteem.

This study examines this issue that whether the provided indicators for assessing the purposefulness on the basis of religious elements that are based on divine revelation, can accurately assess the purposefulness of the individuals. Also this outstands this view that by this test one can study the relationship between life purposefulness and religious attitudes and moral foundations.

Ghobari Bonab also sees trust as one of the factors that can lead a man to achieve the aim of life. The trusting person in addition to having trust to the main element of trust (attempt to reach the aim) and knows it important and essential, he also integrate his powers in terms of his emotional forces and thinks only of the aim (Ghobari Bonab, 2009). Although various findings and studies have examined the effects of spiritual and religious variables with purposefulness in some of social groups, but a study to examine the relationship between purposefulness and religious attitudes and ethical foundations (in form of one study), and also about the students, has not been found. Hence, concerning the importance of the role of students in the determination of society fate, this question has come to the mind of the researcher that if there is a significant relationship between students' religious attitudes and moral foundations? This hypothesis was formulated to achieve the mentioned goal:

1. There is a significant relationship between purposefulness in life and religious attitudes.
2. There is a significant relationship between purposefulness in life and moral foundations.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Participants

The subjected sample in this research is the students of Payam Noor University in Qom in the academic year of 2013-2014 who are between 20 to 25 years old. The sample of this research, concerning the research design and the number of variables, included 200 students from Payam Noor University of Qom who were selected by multistage cluster sampling. To obtain a sufficient sample size, 200 questionnaires were administered. 35 questionnaires were ignored due to incomplete answers or careless responses and result analysis was based on 165 remaining questionnaires. The criterion for entering into the research was having the type of course (general course) and age of between 20 to 25 years of both sexes.

**2.2 Research Tools and Research Method:**

The research method in this study is based on descriptive and correlation. For data gathering questionnaires of religious attitude scale, moral foundations and purposefulness in life were used.

**Religious attitude scale:** Muslims religious attitudes measurement questionnaire is by Serajzadeh and based on Glock & Stark model that has been adapted and coordinated with Islam, particularly Shiah's Islam. This questionnaire consists of 26 items that measures believe, experimental aspects or religious emotions and individual ritualistic. For scoring, the first option (strongly agree) to the last option (strongly disagree) were assigned as the number 4 to 0, respectively. The scoring of the items 20 and 26 were conducted as the same method, but scoring the items of 7, 14, 16, 17 and 19 were performed reverse. The reliability of this test was also by bisection method and Cronbach's alpha of this test, respectively, 0.75 and 0.78, and its validity of 45%, was estimated.

**The scale of purposefulness in life:** This questionnaire was developed in 1969 by Crumbaugh & Maholick that is in order to measure of individual sense, which is currently considered as the most appropriate means of meaning measuring tools. The scoring method is by the total scores of all the questions that higher score indicate the purpose in life and the stronger sense. The reliability of this test has been obtained by Cronbach's alpha method (92%) and halving.

**The scale of moral foundations MFQ30:** This questionnaire was developed in 2007 by Haidt & Graham. This scale consists of 30 items, and in order to evaluate and measure of moral five parameters that according to opinion of Haidt & Graham, the basic and fundamental parameters of moral deals, which to Haidt and Graham, are basic and fundamental moral aspects, among the different ethnic, racial and linguistic cultures and identities.

The aspects of these scale consists of care / harm, fairness (justice), loyalty to the group, respect for authority, and purity. This scale is composed of two parts, which is scored in terms of six degrees grading scale.

**2.3 Procedure:**

The questioner was present in the classes which were selected by multistage cluster method, during the holding one of the general courses, after attracting attention and appeal of the students, began to distribute and then collect the questionnaires and relevant answer sheets at the same time and place. During one week, all of data were collected.

**3. RESULTS**

The table number "1" indicates the descriptive statistics of central indicators data and dispersion of the scales of religious attitudes, purposefulness of life and the moral foundations.

**Table 1:** The central indicators and dispersion of the scales of religious attitudes, purposeful of life and the moral foundations

| Moral foundations | Purposefulness in life | Religious attitudes |                | n              |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 164               | 165                    | 165                 |                |                |
| 1                 | 0                      | 0                   | Missing values |                |
| 102.75            | 103.32                 | 70.99               |                | $\bar{X}$      |
| 104.00            | 105.00                 | 72.00               |                | Md             |
| 22.492            | 21.581                 | 9.249               |                | s              |
| 505.882           | 465.744                | 85.536              |                | S <sup>2</sup> |

The table number "2" indicates the inferential indicators of research hypotheses. According to the data of this table, the following results were obtained.

**Table 2:** The inferential indicators of research hypotheses

| Moral foundations scale | Purposefulness of life scale | Religious attitude scale |                 |                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| .026                    | .068                         | 1                        | r <sub>xy</sub> | Religious attitude scale |
| .745                    | .389                         |                          | p*              |                          |
| 164                     | 165                          | 165                      | N               | Purposeful of life scale |
| .102                    | 1                            | .068                     | r <sub>xy</sub> |                          |
| .192                    |                              | .389                     | p               |                          |
| 164                     | 165                          | 165                      | N               | Moral foundations scale  |
| 1                       | .102                         | .026                     | r <sub>xy</sub> |                          |
|                         | .192                         | .745                     | p               |                          |
| 164                     | 164                          | 164                      | N               |                          |

P= significance level

- There is no significant relationship between the purposefulness of life and religious attitudes with regard to the significance level ( $sig[2 - tailed] = 0 / 389 > 0 / 05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis number "1" is rejected.

-There is no significant relationship between the purposefulness in life and moral foundations with regard to the significance level ( $sig[2 - tailed] = 0 / 192 > 0 / 05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis number 2 is rejected.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The review of theoretical foundations and literature review related to purpose in life shows that little research has been done on this variable. The important point is that the vast majority of studies have been done on purpose in Western cultures. Review of the literature in the country of Iran in this field did not lead to acceptable results and useful studies have not been found in this regard.

In this study, efforts have been made to investigate the relationship between purposefulness and religious attitudes and ethical foundations among students, about which no research has been done so far. Based on the results in this section, it can be said that this research is consistent with the results of Kermani and Danesh (2011), which examined the impact of religious attitudes and sensation seeking on marital adjustment of married teachers in Pakdasht town. Also in the research of Zohoor and Tavakoli (2000), some results have been achieved that are somewhat close to the results of this study. In the mentioned study, the status of religious attitudes of students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences have been examined and the results showed that academically higher level students and also with more educational years, have weaker religious attitudes.

The research of Zohoor and Tavakkoli (2000) is not consistent with the researches, such as Zika and Chamberlaine, (1992), Chamberlaine and Zika (1998), Debats and et al (1993), Debats (1990), Harris and Standards (2001) and also Debats (1996), quoted by Mascard and et al (2004). The research is not also consistent with the research of Cheraghi and et al (2009) that show in their study that there is significant relationship between religiosity and general health.

The present study indicates that there is no significant relationship between purposefulness and moral foundations and religious attitudes. Perhaps we can infer that in today's society, unfortunately people do not build the purpose and its various dimensions which include purposefulness of their existence, having individual and social goals, having a reason to live, harmonizing the life with the universe, responsibility, belief in freedom of choice, finding meaning in life and a sense of inhibition for personal life, based on religious attitudes and this is very worrying and sound a dangerous alarm and warning for the young generation.

It is worthy that the reason of this issue be investigated by other researchers. The researchers of this study hypothesize that the new generation is a generation with different ideals and instead of thinking about the real aims, think of utopian dreams and goals. Of course because people attitudes and beliefs are affected by and are the reaction of different cultural, social, political and religious factors and elements, it may be possible that religion does not directly and greatly affect creating these attitudes and beliefs. Also the moral foundations which form in the childhood and are mostly formed by the impact of parental and adult commands and prohibitions, affect people purposeful living, but the findings of this research, unbelievably show the opposite of these findings and studies.

#### 5. Limitations

Like most research in behavioral science, this research was carried out with some limitations, recognizing which seems reasonable for doing further researches and trying for reducing or eliminating these limitations. The limitations of this study include the invitation for cooperation and participation of students in responding to the study questionnaires, particularly the test of religious attitude in which they referred to the faith and religious aspects of students. On the other hand, in the present study, we can refer to the vacancy for the other effective variables (cognitive, social, personal, economic, etc.) in the student's life purposefulness. Because of the role of several factors in students' life purposefulness, it is essential that future studies consider the role of these factors.

#### 6. Suggestions

- According to this study results, another similar study with the same topic, should be conducted in different countries. Concerning the fact that this research has not been done according to sex and academic achievement of the individuals, it is better that similar studies should be conducted according to gender and educational status. It is suggested to search more for the factors affecting the purposefulness of life.

For planning of educational strategies, the results of this research and other similar researches should be announced to institutions and relevant ministries in order to be set in the suitable order planning programs. It seems better that educational and training warnings derived from this research results, be considered by the educational authorities.

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