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Abstract

The present study examined the extent to which religiosity, operationalized as intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation was related to academic stress in self-report measures among 100 (40 male and 60 female) students from Kashmir University. Pearson's product method was used to find the results. The results indicated that intrinsic religious orientation has a significant negative relation with facets of academic stress such as group study stress, time management stress and stress due to peers. In other words it can be said that more intrinsic the person is lesser the amount of academic stress he faced. Similarly a positive correlation was found between extrinsic religious orientation and five of the seven facets of academic stress namely, Result Stress, Group Study Stress, Peer Stress, Time Management Stress and Self Inflicted Stress. In other words it means that more an individual is extrinsic higher the scores are in academic stress facets mentioned above.

Keywords: Academic Stress; Religiosity; Religious Orientation.

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Introduction

In this century, mental pressure and stress are one of the main fields of research in many disciplines and surveying its effects on our life is one of the widest research fields of modern age. Stress, solicitousness and finding remedies are a prevalent part of our quotidian life. Facing with stressful situation is not recherche transpiring in our life. Causes like customary stressful events or disastrous events which transpire in some occasions differ from one person to another.

Stress can be considered as “any factor, acting internally or externally, which makes adaptation to environment difficult and which induces increased effort on the part of the individual to maintain a state of equilibrium between himself and herself and the external environment” (Humphrey, Yow, & Bowden, 2000) [14]. Additionally, “stress is a physical and mental response to everyday demands, particularly those associated with change” (Richlin-Klonsky & Hoe, 2003) [25].

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Academic Stress

One form of stress that is constantly being experienced by college and university students is stress in relation to academic concerns. “Academic stress is the product of a combination of academic-related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual” (Wilks, 2008.). Academic stress is a concern that must not be taken for granted because it adversely affects the overall adjustment of students (Hussain, Kumar, & Husain, 2008) and several studies have already documented the effect of stress on students [1, 15, 20, 27, 28]. In 2005, Kumar and Jejurkar [18] “found that academic factors were responsible for higher level of stress” among undergraduate students.

It is important to the society that students should learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will in turn make them contribute positively to the development of the general economy of any nation. However, the intricate academic environment sometimes poses great medical problems to the students’ lives [9] that tend to negate the positive gains that one would expect after completion of University. These assertions need attention if the needed stress management in university has to be effective. Students’ expectations vary with respect to personality and their backgrounds which influences on how individual perceive the environment around him/her. Students at the university have different expectations, goals, and values that they want to fulfill at the university, which is only possible if the students’ expectations, goals, and values are integrated with that of the university.

Components of Academic Stress

Many factors contribute to the stress being experienced by students but specifically, the following are associated with academic stress based on literature: time management issues, financial burdens, interactions with teachers, personal goals, social activities,

adjustment to the campus environment, self inflicted stress, group work stress, lack of support networks [29], admission procedures, high standards of parents, curriculum being highly concept laden, inappropriate school timings, high student-teacher ratio, non-conducive physical environment of classrooms, the absence of healthy teacher-student interaction, irrational rules of discipline, physical punishment, excessive or unbalanced school-work, teaching methodology, indifferent attitudes of teachers, overemphasis on weaknesses rather than strengths [20], expectations of students themselves, expectations of parents, and expectations of teachers [2]. Additionally, the following were recognized to be associated to academic stress based on studies: academic workload, attending lectures [1], examinations, school curriculum [26], inadequate learning materials [1, 26], performance in academic work, academic difficulties [1, 17], overcrowded classrooms [1], subject-related projects [8], uncertainty in getting a job after graduation/worrying about the future [1, 26], self-expectations [22], expectations of peers, expectations of friends [1], expectations of family members/parents [1, 26], financial limitations [17], and admission procedures [8] frustrations, financials problems, conflicts, pressures, changes, and self expectations [7].

Religious Orientation

In society today, individuals have a vast number of religions to choose from, many of which appear to reflect radically different beliefs and values. Further, there are many different motives for being religious. Religious orientation is the term employed by psychologists to refer to the way in which a person practices or lives out his or her religious beliefs and values [6]. The two most cited aspects of religious orientation are intrinsic and extrinsic propounded by Allport & Ross in 1969 [13].

An intrinsically oriented person considers religion as an ultimate end in itself; it is a master motive in life. Religious values and beliefs are internalized “without reservations,” and other needs and goals are accommodated, reorganized, and brought in harmony with these religious contexts. Importantly, an intrinsic religious orientation “floods the whole life with Motivation and meaning”. Thus intrinsic dimension refers the deeply internalized and genuine religious faith that is central motivational force in an individual’s life.

Extrinsically oriented individual approaches religion in a utilitarian or instrumental fashion; it helps to attain self-centered ends, such as safety, solace or sociability. Furthermore, religion is lightly held, over simplified, not reflected upon, and not well integrated in the deeper life of the subject. Thus the extrinsic oriented person treats religion merely as a means to achieve other ends, such as safety and social status. In the present study, religious orientation will also be defined in terms of Allport & Ross (1967) model i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic dimension. In the present study, the religious orientation will be studied in terms of Allport & Ross (1967) model of religious orientation.

Religiosity Orientations and Stress

Since the present study investigates the role of religious orientation in direct academic stress among students, the focus will be that individuals may use religion as a defense process to reduce the level of academic stress. According to Pargament (1985) [23] religion has three roles in the coping process. Religion can serve (i) as a part of the elements of coping, (ii) as a contributor to coping,

and (iii) as a product of coping. Islamic view point sees religion as faith “*Iman*”, action “*Amal*”, and worship “*Ibadat*” triple mandate. Similarly adjustment to difficult circumstances appeared to be better predicted by religious orientation. For instance, religious sources and skills (religiosity values, praying, and reading Quran) were significantly related to the academic stress for students. Students with these skills were able to control their academic stressor during their study times at university [5]. Studies have also proved that students with internal religious orientation are able to use problem-based coping way in a higher degree as compared to the external-oriented ones who use emotion based coping [16]. An intrinsic orientation has been positively associated with good mental health and freedom from worry or guilt [6]. Intrinsic religiosity has also predicted low levels of depression [21]. In addition, two other studies cited by McFarland and Warren (1992) indicate that an intrinsic orientation is negatively related to depression, while an extrinsic orientation is positively related to depression.

Moreover, religious coping strategies have showed differential relationships to the outcomes of various stressful situations Zwingmann, C., & Murken, S. (2000) [30]. More specifically, whether religious coping is helpful or harmful depends upon the particular type of religious coping strategy being employed. Thus, religious coping would appear to be an ambivalent phenomenon which does not automatically entail beneficial outcomes. Higher order factor analyses have revealed that particular religious coping methods can be classified into two broad overarching patterns: positive and negative religious coping Pargament, K. I., Smith, B. W., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. M. (1998) [24]. In general, positive religious coping strategies, which reflect a confident and constructive turning to religion for support, tend to be beneficial for people undergoing stressful life events Ano, G. G., & Vasconcelles, E. B. (2005) [3]. In contrast, negative religious coping strategies, those which reflect an engaging in religious struggle and doubt are generally more maladaptive Ano, G. G., & Vasconcelles, E. B. (2005).

Keeping in view the both theoretical and empirical aspects of religious orientation and academic stress, the present study was carried to study the influence of religious orientation on academic stress among the Kashmir university students with following objectives:

1. To assess the level of stress among Kashmir University Students.
2. To study the relationship between religious orientation and academic stress among the Kashmir University Students.

On the basis of the objectives framed above, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: There will be a significant relationship between academic stress and religious orientation among the Kashmir University Students.

Methodology

Participants

The sample in the study consisted of 100 (60 Females & 40 Males) students from Kashmir university randomly drawn from different departments namely, Department of Psychology, Sociology, Commerce, Pharmacy, History, Education, Physics, Management

and Economics. The age of the subjects ranged from 21-23 years.

Tools used: To collect the desired data for the present study, two standardised psychological tests were used.

1. Age Universal Religious Orientation Scale.
2. Academic Stress Inventory.

Age Universal Religious Orientation Scale by Gorsuch & Vanable (1983) [12]. This scale contains 20 items, 8 of which are meant to characterize a person as intrinsic and rests of the 12 items are meant for measuring the extrinsic orientation. So far the reliability of the scale is concerned, it is reported that the internal consistency for Religious Orientation Scale Intrinsic ranges from adequate to excellent with Cronbach alphas most typically in the mid .80 (Donahue, 1985) [10]. The internal consistencies reported for the Religious Orientation Scale Extrinsic are invariably lower, with Cronbach alphas most typically in the low .70 (e.g. Donahue, 1985). Similarly, Burris & Tarpley (1998) reported two week test-retest reliability as .84 and .78 respectively.

Academic Stress Inventory by Lin, M.L. & Chen, F.S. (2009)

[19]. The inventory contains 34 items which are aimed to measure the stress levels of the students originating from different academic sources. The items in the scale measure seven types of academic stress issues namely, Stress from teachers, Stress from results, Stress from tests, Studying in group stress, Peer stress, Time management stress and Self-inflicted stress. The overall reliability of the inventory established by the authors is .90 while as the factor wise Cronbach reliability of the inventory is 0.90 for teachers stress, 0.89 for result stress; test stress 0.92; study in group stress 0.87; peer stress 0.85; time management stress 0.87 and self inflicted stress 0.86. This demonstrated reliability of the various factors of the academic stress pre-test questionnaire achieved the levels required by the estimation standards of George and Mallery (2003) [11].

Procedure: These two measures were in printed form and were administered on each randomly selected subject by assuring them that information provided by them will be kept strictly confidential. Having obtained the data from the subjects, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment for obtaining the results.

Statistical Analysis: The analysis of data was carried out by us-

Results and Interpretation

Table 1. Frequency distribution of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity among Kashmir University students (n = 100).

Intrinsic Religiosity			Extrinsic Religiosity		
Level	F	% age	Level	F	% age
Low	0	0%	Low	0	0%
Average	1	1%	Average	61	61%
High	99	99%	High	39	39%

From the above data, it is evident that 0% of the total sample of the study comes under the low levels of intrinsic religiosity while only 99% of the total sample comes under the high levels of intrinsic religiosity. Similarly, 0% of the total sample comes under the low levels of extrinsic religiosity while 39% of the total sample comes under the low levels of extrinsic religiosity.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the different dimensions of academic stress among the Kashmir university students.

Academic Stress Facets	Low		Average		High	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers Stress	1	1%	48	48%	51	51%
Exam Stress	2	2%	70	70%	28	28%
Result Stress	4	4%	76	76%	20	20%
Group Study Stress	3	3%	71	71%	26	26%
Peer Stress	1	1%	67	67%	32	32%
Time Management Stress	7	7%	46	46%	47	47%
Self Inflicted Stress	3	3%	56	56%	41	41%

The information presented in the table-2 reveals that 1% of the total sample showed low level of teachers stress while 51% of the total sample showed the high level of teachers stress. On the Exam Stress dimension of mental health, a low percentage that is, 2% of the total sample population have low level of stress while as 28% fall in the high level of Exam Stress dimension. In terms of Result Stress 4% fall in the low level while 20% fall in the high level.

Similarly on the Group Study Stress dimension of the Academic Stress, 3% fall in the low level while 26% of the sample population falls in the high level. On the dimension of the Peer Stress, 1% falls in the low level while 32% of the total sample population falls in the high level. In terms of Time Management Stress 7% of the total sample falls in the low levels while 47% fall in the high levels. On the dimension of Self-inflicted Stress 3% of the sample fall in the low levels while 41% fall in the high levels of self inflicted stress.

Table 3. Correlation between dimensions of religiosity and academic stress among university students (n = 100).

Academic Stress Dimensions	Intrinsic Religiosity	Extrinsic Religiosity
Teachers Stress	.068 ^{NS}	.127 ^{NS}
Exam Stress	.021 ^{NS}	.291*
Result Stress	.030 ^{NS}	.132 ^{NS}
Group Study Stress	.009 ^{NS}	.280*
Peer Stress	.023 ^{NS}	.223*
Time Management Stress	.007 ^{NS}	.223*
Self Inflicted Stress	.057 ^{NS}	.390*

*=Highly Significant at 0.01 level. NS = Insignificant at 0.01 Level

The Table-3 shows the correlation between religious orientation and academic stress among university students. The table reveals an insignificant correlation between intrinsic religiosity and all the seven dimensions of the academic stress: namely, teachers stress ($r = .068, p > .01$), exam stress ($r = .021, p > .01$), result stress ($r = -.030, p < .01$), group study stress ($r = .009, p > .01$), peer stress ($r = .023, p < .01$), time management stress ($r = .007, p < .01$) and self inflicted stress ($r = .057, p > .01$). On the other hand a significant positive correlation was found between extrinsic religiosity and five of the seven dimensions of academic stress namely, exam stress ($r = .291, p > .01$), group study stress ($r = .028, p > .01$), peer stress ($r = .223, p > .01$), time management stress ($r = .223, p > .01$) and self inflicted stress ($r = .390, p > .01$), while no significant correlation was found between extrinsic religiosity and teachers stress ($r = .127, p > .01$) and result stress ($r = .13, p > .01$).

ing appropriate statistical tools: Frequency Method, Pearson’s correlation coefficient.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to empirically explore the extent to which religiosity relates to academic stress. Religiosity was divided into intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. The findings of the study indicated that intrinsic religious orientation has a significant negative relation with facets of academic stress such as group study stress, time management stress and stress due to peers. In other words it can be said that more intrinsic the person is lesser the amount of academic stress he faced. Similarly a positive correlation was found between extrinsic religious orientation and five of the seven facets of academic stress namely, Result Stress, Group Study Stress, Peer Stress, Time Management Stress and Self Inflicted Stress. In other words it means that more an individual is extrinsic higher the scores are in academic stress facets mentioned above. These results are in line with the findings of Alireza Jafari (2011) that intrinsically religious people felt lower levels of stress and use problem focused coping to a higher degree as compared to extrinsically oriented people. The results are further consistent with the findings of Baqutayan (2011) [4] that religious orientation serves as a coping mechanism among the students in times of stress. Thus it can be said that intrinsic religious orientation relates to adaptive emotional traits in times of stress while extrinsic religious orientation relates inversely. It can also be said that the study highlights the importance of inculcation of moral and religious beliefs among the students along with academics so that they can cope with the stresses that emerge from the academics. With respect to frequency distribution of academic stress it was found that maximum student’s fall in the moderate range of stress. However, one thing that is worthy to note from the study is that among all the factors of academic stress, 51% the subjects scored higher in one factor namely, teachers stress. This highlights that students are not comfortable with the way they are handled at the university. Therefore, the teachers should deal in an effective and friendly manner with the students. A cordial and student-friendly environment should be provided to them so that they can flourish and develop their abilities to the fullest. These findings should be taken into consideration while fashioning out interven-

tion programmes for university students experiencing academic stress.

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