

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND SEXUAL VARIETY SEEKING BETWEEN IRANIAN STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between sexual variety-seeking factors and spiritual awareness among a sample of Iranian students who were selected randomly for the present study. Measurement tools included SVS (sexual variety seeking) and SAI (spirituality assessment inventory). This research included 3 hypotheses; of which 1 was accepted with moderate significant relationship and 2 were accepted with weak significant relationship. The findings indicate that there exists a negative association between spiritual awareness and sexual variety seeking in behaviour which means spirituality can reduce the desire for sexual variety seeking between the behaviours of men towards sexual variety. However, there is not a significant relationship between seeking sexual variety and intimacy seeking in relationships.

Keywords : Spirituality Awareness Sexual Variety Seeking Behaviour, Intimacy Seeking and Moral Orientation.

Introduction

There are concepts in people's lives which often occupy their minds, concepts like religion/spirituality, sex and death. In social science these concepts are the focus of some researches, in 1980s psychologist Paul D. Cameron conducted a survey on how often the average person thinks about these concepts which were called the most inscrutable phenomena in human experience. In a study of 3,416 people, participants were asked what they were thinking about in the preceding five minutes. Results showed young adults, age 18 to 25, think about sex at least once in any 10-minute period; middle-aged people, at least every 35 minutes; and people over 65, once an hour. Young adults think about religion once every 25 minutes; middle-aged people, once every 15 minutes; older people, every 10 minutes (Ellens, 2006). There have been deep connections between sex and religion/spirituality in different centuries. In society, culture shapes sexual beings, and what is perceived as normal, natural, true, good, bad, right, or wrong is connected to culture-specific norms, rules, values, and expectancies. Cultural attitudes toward sexuality may have biological roots to the extent moral sentiments have evolved to serve reproductive self-interest (Buss et al., 1999) since Religion and spirituality as the elements in shaping a person's culture could affect the way a person's identity and worldview (Bartoil, 2007). The current problem is that many patients come for treatment feeling like "failed monogamists," unable to make long-term sexually exclusive romantic relationships work. There may be considerable feelings of shame and guilt which have spiritual/religious and moral roots about that state of affairs if they involve in multiple sex partners and also some of them are not satisfied with their partner and they claim it case to be bored this kind of sexual relationship for them.

The current problem is more crucial for Iranian students in Malaysia, because they have faced a new culture, although both cultures have some similarities. There are some situations in which students are not willing to come to counseling session regarding their sexual variety seeking issues. So when counselor wants to work with Iranian culture they must to pay attention the role of spiritual beliefs in Iranian culture. So these topics are among some of the more difficult issues that persons from any community and cultural background have to face. Due to the sensitive nature of sexual variety seeking and the relative "taboo" attached to such matters, this study could explore how Iranian communities in general deal with them. Also Researches has been shown that many Iranian people are not perfectly satisfied with their sex lives even within committed relationships. Infidelity and divorce may also sometimes reflect sexual dissatisfaction in Iranian population (Rafatmah, Nazari & Nasrollahi, 2011). In recent years, some researchers (Doherty, 2001; Goodman & DoUahite, 2006) found that religious and spiritual values are predictive of having moral commitment in marriage. This study addressed the following research questions:



1. Is there a relationship between spiritual awareness and Variety Seeking in Sexual Behaviour between Iranian male students in Malaysia?
2. Is there a relationship between spiritual awareness and Variety Seeking in Sexual Behaviour between Iranian male students in Malaysia?
3. Is there a relationship between spiritual awareness and moral orientation between Iranian male students in Malaysia?

As a more concise and formal statement of the objective of this study, the key objectives of this research were:

1. To describe spiritual and sexual Variety seeking of Iranian students.
2. To examine a relationship between spiritual awareness and sexual variety seeking factors among Iranian male students.

By all indications, Spirituality/religion is somehow connected to sex and sexual behaviors. Moreover there is new trend regarding applying spirituality/religion in counseling which seems to affect positive outcome in both mental and physical health. Perhaps this is one of the reasons such interest continues to grow, even among those who might be somewhat reluctant to bridge the gaps that have traditionally existed between spirituality and religion and sciences and social sciences.

Materials and Methods

The nature of the current study is deductive and descriptive, and the research method was correlational research. This study entitled “relationship between spirituality factor and sexual variety seeking factors of Iranian male students in Malaysia” and the nature of the constructs, the available quantitative instruments for measuring constructs and the benefit of such a study; (that it can be conducted in a relatively short time period) descriptive research appeared the most appropriate research design. This study was done in Malaysia, Selangor at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Population of this study is Iranian male student in Malaysia which is formally reported by Embassy of Iran roughly around 17000. In Universiti Putra Malaysia as one of the universities in which has most of Iranian students, there are about 2000 Iranian student as reported by School of Graduate Students in UPM. This research was based on probability sampling design with a systematic random technique in which the selection of participant was from an ordered sampling frame. A list of Iranian students was provided by Iranian Students Association in UPM in which Male students was 630. In this study sampling frame was chosen from 630 male students from initial number 6 with an interval of 10, so total sample was drawn is 105 male students. But 100 of them were volunteers to participate in this study. In order to measure variables in this study two questionnaires were utilized, the Sexual Variety-seeking Scale (SVSS) designed by M. Arefnazari, M. Ahmadi, S. Bakht, P. Peivandi, A. RafatMah, M. Shahnazari, and B. Nasrollahi (2011) and the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) by Todd W. Hall and Keith J. Edwards (2002). The SVSS includes three sub-scales which are sexual variety seeking in sexual behaviour, morality orientation and intimacy seeking. And from SAI questionnaire one subscale were chosen, which is spiritual awareness because the rest of subscale is not related to the objectives of this study. Face validity and content validity were taken and it was reported that all items were comprehensible and clear to answer according to students and experts of the fields. The main scales in this study are long enough; spiritual awareness which is measured by SAI has 19 items in five sub-scales with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.96 which shows high inter-item consistency for n=100, and each sub-scales of sexual variety seeking was analysed distinctly; sexual variety seeking in behaviour 26 items with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.94, morality orientation 10 items with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83, intimacy seeking 9 items with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 for n=100.

Results and Discussion

This study also gathered a holistic account of the demographic profile of the respondents, because there were differences of age and marital status between Iranian students in this study. The composition of the 100 Iranian students involved in this study consists of 74% of unmarried respondents and 26% of male respondents. Regarding age proportion between respondents, 9% of respondents were under 22, 18% between 22-24, and the rest is 73% above 24.



Descriptive statistics

The measurement of spirituality in a scale of 1 to 5 (1-2.5 low, 2.5-3.5 average and 3.5-5 high) between 100 respondents revealed (as shown in table 4) that Iranian students in Malaysia have high spiritual awareness with a mean of 3.75. The measurement of sexual variety seeking between 100 respondents revealed that Iranian students in Malaysia have a higher mean (2.55) in sexual variety seeking in behaviour in comparison to other variables of sexual variety seeking. And intimacy seeking and moral orientation have average means 2.42 and 2.38 respectively.

Correlation analysis

In this study explanatory correlational research design has been employed to show a simple association between two main variables - spirituality and sexual variety seeking. So in this correlational study, the researcher initiated the data analysis by displaying of correlation scores (in table 1), and then exploring the associations between scores in terms of direction, form and strength.

Table 1: Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

	SVSB	IS	MO
SA	-0.433	-0.258	0.343

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). SA: Spiritual Awareness, SVSB: Sexual Variety Seeking in Behaviour IS: Intimacy Seeking and MO: Moral Orientation.

Table 1 reports that correlations were found between spiritual awareness and sexual variety seeking factors in significance level of 0.05. Pearson correlations were of varying strengths; one being significant moderate negative relationship, one being significant slight/weak negative relationship, and one being significant slight/weak positive relationship. No strong correlations were found.

Conclusion

The results indicated that, in the population under study, that Spiritual awareness and sexual variety seeking has a negative correlation with each other which means spirituality can reduce the desire for sexual variety seeking. This study suggests spiritual awareness that seem to influence on desire for sexual variety seeking and moral commitment among Iranian male students can be known as a predictor and healer in terms of client who come to counselling and seek help for sexual variety seeking problems. This might help to understand how the participants conceptualised their or their partner's sexual preferences, depending on their previous experience and their sexual instincts which give holistic insight about men's sexual life the key to establishing spiritual connections with Asian clients is through communicating empathic understanding.

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