

# The Relationship between Religious Orientation and Academic Resilience with the Mediation of Spirituality

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v4i3.736>

| Maryam Bakhtiarvand<sup>1,\*</sup> | Hassan Nokarizi<sup>2</sup> | Morteza Bakhtiarvand<sup>3</sup> |  
| Samira Bashiri<sup>4</sup> |

<sup>1</sup>PhD. Student of Philosophy of Islamic Education, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup>M.A of Family Counseling, Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran

<sup>3</sup>PhD. in Educational Technology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>4</sup>M.A. in Iran History, Azad University of Mahallat, Iran

\*maryambakhtiarvand@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between religious orientation and academic resilience with the mediation of spirituality in medical students. The subjects included 140 students (70 females and 70 males) from different faculties of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, who were selected in a multi-stage cluster method. The research tools included Aaronson's spirituality scale, Allport and Ross internal and external religious orientations, and the academic resilience scale. In the analysis of the research findings, Multiple Regression was used in the simultaneous hierarchical method in accordance with the steps of Baron and Kenny (1986). The results showed that internal religious orientation was a positive predictor of spirituality and spirituality was a positive and significant predictor of academic resilience. Also, the spirituality variable was a strong mediator in the relationship between religious orientations and academic resilience. Therefore, people's spirituality and religiosity are significant predictors of academic resilience ( $p \leq 0.0001$ ).

## KEYWORDS

Academic resilience; spirituality; internal orientation of religion; external orientation of religion

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the approach of positive psychology, with the slogan of paying attention to human talents and abilities, has been favored by researchers in various fields of psychology. One of the proposed constructs in positive psychology is resilience (Carr, 2006). Many social researchers in the 1970s investigated why some people not only remain healthy but also survive adversity. And the risks work well. This concept was called "resilience" (Patterson, 2002). Resilience refers to the individual's ability to react in the face of psychological challenges (Strumpfer, 2001), and academic resilience is the ability of students to achieve academic and social success in school despite the problems they face in this environment (Capella and Weinstein, 2001). Resilience as a component of mental health is affected by various biological, psycho-social, cultural, economic, religious and environmental factors (Switzer, 1999).

Mental health is one of the constructs related to academic resilience. Mental health can be defined as the ability to communicate coordinately and harmoniously with others, change and modify the personal and social environment, and resolve conflicts and personal desires in a logical, fair and appropriate manner (Salehi, Soleimanizadeh, Bagheri Yazdi and Abbaszadeh, 2007). Sociologists believe that health and mental illness are not just biological or psychological facts, but also have social dimensions and nature at the same time. Social factors play an important role in creating, maintaining and promoting health

(Cochrane, 2016). Religiosity and spirituality are one of the important cultural factors that are related to mental health.

Rippentrop, Altmaier, Chen, Found and Keffala (2005), in a study to understand the relationship between religion and spirituality with physical and mental health among patients, concluded that forgiveness, religious coping, daily spiritual practices and rituals, religious support and religious and spiritual self-evaluation have been significantly predicting the mental health of terminally ill cancer patients. The research findings of Pajevic, Sinanovic, Osman and Hasanovic (2005) and Hatami Zargaran, Soleimani Khashab and Sharifi Ardani (2013) with Examining the relationship between religion and mental health indicates that obedience, obedience and sincere worship to God gives a person an incredible and strange power and a source of moral, emotional and spiritual energy that is used to deal with problems and mental discomforts caused by Environmental pressures help him and ultimately lead to happiness. Religiosity reduces the tendency to engage in risky behaviors. The findings of Moreira-Almeida, Lotufoneto and Koenig (2006) in a meta-analysis study show that religious behaviors have a significant relationship with mental health indicators (including life satisfaction, satisfaction, positive feeling, and high morale). In addition to this, the effects of religious behavior on mental health are usually more effective among people who are in stressful life situations (such as old age, physically disabled people, and terminally ill patients).

In addition to studying the effects of religiosity on mental health, another part of the research in this field has emphasized the effects of different types of religious orientation (internal and external) on mental health. They have come to the conclusion that only internal religious orientation can lead to improvement of mental health. The findings of Shahbazi and Delavar (2006), Nesabeh (2008) and Roghanchi (2009) showed that there is a relationship between internal religious orientation and mental health. There is a direct relationship and an inverse relationship between external religious orientation and mental health. In examining the relationship between religious orientation and mental health among the students of all public universities in Tehran, Janbozorgi (2006) found that the more internal the religious orientation is, the higher the mental health. The more a person's religious orientation becomes external, the more the feeling of fatigue and the symptoms of the person's illness. The final result of this research indicates that internalized religion plays a key role in creating mental health. Finally, the results of the research of Lehsaie, Azargoon and Moradi (2017) in the field of investigating the religious orientation and mental health of immigrants have shown that the correlation coefficient obtained for internal religious orientation with mental health of immigrants is equal to 0.79 and for external religious orientation is equal to 0.75 (Dezutter, 2006).

In the field of relationships between religion and spirituality and positive psychology, not much research has been done, and only in the last two decades and with the expansion of positive psychology, the role of religion in healthy and perfecting human beings and creating a healthy and growing society, the attention of many It has inspired psychologists. In the current research, we are looking to answer the question, is there a meaningful relationship between religious orientation and academic resilience with the mediation of spirituality?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research population included all students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, 140 students (70 females and 70 males) were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method.

## **Research Instruments**

### ***Academic Resilience Scale***

The Martin Resilience Scale was designed by Martin (2001, 2003) in order to measure the academic resilience of students in dealing with obstacles, challenges and conditions of academic pressure and stress. This scale is one-dimensional and includes 6 items. Each item is graded on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The construct validity of this scale has been confirmed in the internal validity analysis through factor characteristics. The internal homogeneity of the scale has been confirmed by analyzing the items and their correlation, checking the mean and standard deviation of the items, the total correlation coefficient with each item, and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient in a specific way each time by removing the items. Also, the factor load of the items has been reported from 0.62 to 0.86 due to the one-dimensionality of this scale, which all indicate the favorable validity of the academic resilience scale. Also, the reliability coefficients of Cronbach's alpha are reported from 0.85 to 0.88 each time the item is deleted.

In the present study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine reliability and factor analysis was used to measure validity. The results of the factor analysis using the principal components method indicated the existence of only one general factor in the scale. Based on the eigenvalue of the existing factor, they predicted a total of 47.9% of the total variance of the scale. The KMO index is equal to 0.83 and the chi-square value in Bartlett's sphericity test is equal to 2.90, which is significant at the level of 0.0001 and shows the adequacy of sampling and the correlation matrix of the scale. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is 0.77.

### ***Internal and external Orientation Questionnaire***

The Religious Orientation Scale was developed by Alpert and Ross (1967) to measure internal and external orientation to religion. It is a 20-item self-report scale that measures 11 items of internal orientation and 9 items of external orientation. The validity and reliability of this scale has been favorably reported in domestic and foreign researches (Allport and Ross, 1967; Hosseini, 2019). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine reliability and factor analysis method was used to determine validity. The resulting alpha coefficient for the internal orientation dimension was equal to 0.73 and for the external dimension was equal to 0.66. The results of confirmatory factor analysis (KMO coefficient value equal to 0.86 and Bartlett's Chi-2 test value 3736.15 ( $P < 0.0001$ )) confirmed the existence of two factors in the scale.

Hatami Zargaran, Soleimani Khashab and Sharifi Ardani (2013) have reported the reliability coefficient of this scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.66 and for the internal orientation subscale 0.78 and for the external subscale 0.64 [10]. Validity was also investigated in Hosseini's research (2009) through factor analysis using the principal components method with Varimax Rotation.

In this research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for measuring the reliability of each of the scales of spirituality, internal and external religious orientation, and happiness is respectively (0.92, 0.71, 0.83, and 0.93) and from the method of factor analysis and internal homogeneity were used to check the validity of these questionnaires, and Bartlett's sphericity and KMO coefficients showed favorable values.

### ***Spirituality Questionnaire***

Spirituality was evaluated with the short form of Aronson et al. (2002), which includes 14 items for spirituality and 11 items for religiosity. Meanwhile, the spirituality scale includes two factors: "peace and prosperity" (9 items) and is defined by a peaceful outlook on life

and a sense of meaning towards it, while "having a compassionate look towards others" (5 items) which raises the level of tolerance and feeling of compassion and connection with other human beings. Aronson et al. (2002) reported total reliability by Cronbach's alpha of 0.96 for spirituality and religiosity and 0.93 for each factor of spirituality, sense of peace, and 0.87 for the factor of compassionate view of others. Also, the validity of this scale through convergent validity (comparing the total score of the Aaronson scale and each of its factors with Hoge and Doke religious scales) and divergent validity (that is, the SR scale should have a low correlation with the religiosity scale) It has been evaluated with other published measurement tools about religiosity and spirituality. Soleimani Khashab et al. (2013) reported its validity and reliability favorably.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using the path analysis method, the mediating role of spirituality in the relationship between religious orientation and academic resilience was investigated. The path analysis used in this research is based on the model proposed by Baron and Kenney (1986). According to this model, dimensions of religious orientation were considered as exogenous or independent variables, spirituality as an intermediate dependent variable, and academic resilience as final dependent variables or endogenous variables. Also, simultaneous regression method was used to check the path coefficients.

In order to perform path analysis, in the first step, dimensions of religious orientation as a predictor variable and academic resilience as a criterion variable were entered into the regression equation.

**Table.1** Correlation coefficients between research variables and descriptive statistics related to each of them

Standard deviation	mean	4	3	2	1	variable
3/74	20/70				1	1.Internal orientation
3/62	15/68			1	/.34	2. External orientation
5/85	35/01		1	/.25	/.43	3.Spirituality
4/03	17/30	1	/.41	/.2	/.20	4.Resilience

As the results of Table.1 show, internal religious orientation has a positive and significant correlation with spirituality and resilience. Also, external religious orientation has a positive and significant correlation with spirituality ( $p \leq 0.0001$ ). Also, spirituality has a significant relationship with resilience and inner orientation. No significant relationship was observed between external orientation and academic resilience ( $p \leq 0.0001$ ).

**Table 2.** Prediction of resilience based on internal and external religious orientation

Sig	T	B	P	F	R <sup>2</sup>	R	Variable
N.S	1/27	/.9					External orientation
/.3	3/02	/.23	/.1	4/60	0/04	0/22	Internal orientation

As can be seen, internal religious orientation could significantly predict academic resilience with a beta coefficient of 0.23, but then external orientation did not have the ability to predict and the whole model predicted 0.04% of the changes in the variable of

academic resilience. In the second step, dimensions of religious orientation as a predictor variable and spirituality as a criterion variable were entered into the regression equation.

**Table 3.** Predicting spirituality based on religious orientation

Sig	T	B	P	F	R <sup>2</sup>	R	variable
N.S	1/67	.11	.1...1	01/23	0/19	0/45	External orientation
.1...1	5/62	.39					Internal orientation

The results of the simultaneous regression of spirituality on religious orientation show that internal orientation with a beta of 0.39 can significantly and positively predict spirituality, while external orientation could not predict spirituality. The whole model has the ability to predict the changes of the spirituality variable with 0.19%. In the third step, internal religious orientation and spirituality were simultaneously entered into the regression equation as a predictor variable and academic resilience as a criterion variable.

**Table 4.** Prediction of academic resilience based on religious orientation and spirituality

Sig	T	B	P	F	R <sup>2</sup>	R	Variable
N.S	0/34	.12	.1...1	70/18	0/16	00/4	Internal orientation
.1...1	5/36	.39					Spirituality

Baron and Kenny (1986) in their proposed path analysis method, suggest that if the beta coefficients for exogenous variables decrease from the first stage to the third stage, it shows the mediating role of the intermediate dependent variable. In this regard, Table 4 shows the result of the regression analysis of the third step for predicting academic resilience based on internal religious orientation and spirituality. By comparing the beta coefficients for the dimensions of religious orientation in the first step (Table 2) and the third step (Table 4), it was found that the beta coefficient of the internal orientation has completely dropped and as a result of spirituality, the mediating role in the relationship between orientation It plays religious internalization and academic resilience.

As mentioned in the above tables, internal religious orientation in the first stage without the presence of spirituality was able to predict resilience with a beta of 0.23, but in the third stage when spirituality entered the regression model along with internal orientation, the beta coefficient of orientation Internal was not significant, and as a result, the direct path of internal orientation on resilience was removed, and only the intermediate path of orientation, spirituality and academic resilience was confirmed. You can see the final paths in the figure below.



**Figure 1.** The final research model

The purpose of the current research was to investigate a causal model regarding the role of spirituality and religiosity in academic resilience. The path coefficients showed that

religious orientation was a predictor of academic resilience both through spirituality and directly. This finding is in line with the research findings of Logunov et al. (2009) and Soleimani Khashab (2013), which shows that the decrease in spirituality and religiosity is associated with suffering from various diseases and the decrease in mental health, and the increase in spirituality and religiosity with the increase in happiness and satisfaction with Life and psychological well-being (Soleimani Khashab et al., 2013) have been considered to be related. Most of the religions of the world call their followers to positive activities and it acts as an influencing factor on behavior and cognition. Both aspects of religion, engaging in positive activities and avoiding negative activities, create a sense of positive value in the followers of religions. Religion as a mediator affects the thought process and evaluation of the daily events of a person's life. Many researchers believe that with the help of religion and spirituality, it becomes easier to deal with emotions and social conditions (Diener, Lucas, Avishi, 2002) and ultimately causes more individual resilience. The findings of the current research can be considered from two perspectives; first, regarding the mediating role of spirituality, as spirituality has played a mediating role between religious orientation and academic resilience. This finding indicates that spirituality by creating an internalized belief and deep knowledge of religious teachings provides more resilience. In other words, a spiritual person leads to a deeper connection with God as the goal of religion, and in this way, it will bring more stable mental health and well-being for the individual. Other internal and external studies (Soleimani Khashab et al., 2013 Moradi and Soleimani Khashab, 2013; Logunov et al., 2009; Aronson et al., 2002) in the analysis of the relationship between spirituality and religious orientations and spirituality with the components of mental health found that these components are related to inner orientation and spirituality. positive and meaningful and had a negative relationship with extra-religious orientation, and in explaining these findings, they state that a spiritual person in dealing with problems uses a cognitive stage approach that includes three parts; Confronting the problem and accepting it, processing and researching around the desired problem and finally cultivating that problem, it is adopted that in all these stages, a type of original thinking style is proposed, which creates the individual, interpersonal and transpersonal environment for A person is predictable, and in the sense that a person considers his life as the result of his own understanding, he goes on the path of internalizing these issues, in this regard, religion is a theorized spirituality that a rational person can understand from the principles of this religion in order to use it to make the direction of his life order.

## **CONCLUSION**

Another result that deserves attention in this research is the superior power of religious orientation in predicting academic resilience. This finding shows that religiosity in the form of a heart's belief and faith improves the quality and satisfaction of life and ultimately academic resilience in educational fields. Based on this, it can be recommended that in expanding the culture of religiosity, there should be a special emphasis on the internalization of religion in educational environments and less emphasis on symbols and symbols of religiosity.

## **REFERENCES**

- Barron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1173-1182.

- Cappella, E. & Weinstein, R. S. (2001). Turning around reading achievement: Predictors of high school students' academic resilience. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 758-771.
- Switzer, G.E. (1999). *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*. New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 81-104.
- Salehi, L., Soleimanizadeh, L., Bagheri Yazdi, A. & Abbaszadeh, A. (2016). The relationship between religious beliefs and locus of control with mental health in college students. *Journal of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences*, 11th year, vol. 1, pp. 1-10.
- Cochrane, R. (1997). *Social foundations of mental illnesses*. Translated by Farideh Barati and Bahman Najarian, Tehran: Roshd Publications.
- Dezutter, J, Bart, S, & Dirk, H. (2006). Religiosity and Mental Health: A further exploration of the relative importance of religious behaviors vs. religious attitudes, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40, 807-818.
- Hatami Zargarani, F. Soleimani Khashab, A. & Sharifi Ardani, A. (2011). Investigating the mediating role of religious orientation in predicting happiness through spirituality. *Quarterly Research Studies of Islam and Psychology*.
- Hosseini, F. & Latifian, M. (1388). Big five factors of personality and need for recognition. *Iranian Psychologists Quarterly*, (21)6, 61-68.
- Ironson, G., Solomon, G. F., Balbin, E. G., O'Cleirigh, C., George, A., a Kumar, M., et al. (2002). The Ironson-Woods spirituality/religiousness index is associated with long survival, health behaviors, less distress and low cortisol in people with HIV/AIDS. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 24, 34-38
- Janbozorgi, M. (2006). Religious orientation and mental health. *Research and Medicine*, Volume 31, Volume 4, pp. 345-335.
- Lehsaiezadeh, A. Azargoon, V. and Moradi, G. (2007). Examining the religious orientation and mental health of immigrants based on the Allport and Ross model. *Journal of Social Sciences*, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, spring and summer, pp. 149-169.
- Moreira-Almeida, A. LotufoNeto, F. & Koenig, H. (2006). *Religiousness and Mental Health: a review*, Center for the Study of Religious and Spiritual Problems (NEPER), Department of Psychiatry, Universidade de São Paulo (USP), São Paulo (SP), Brazil: 119-131.
- Nesabeh, M. H. (2005). *The role of religious beliefs and opinions in mental health*. Master's thesis in clinical psychology, Shiraz, Shiraz University.
- Pajevic, I. Sinanovic, O. & Hasanovic, M. (2005). Religiosity and Mental Health. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 17, 84-89.
- Paterson, L (2002). The social class of Catholics in Scotland. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, Vol 163, (3), pp 363-379.
- Rippentrop, A. E., Altmaier, E. M., Chen, J. J., Found, E. M., & Keffala, V. J. (2005). The relationship between religion or spirituality and physical pain, mental health, and pain in a chronic pain population. *Pain*, 116, 311-321.
- Roghanchi, M. (2004). *The relationship between religious orientation and mental health of Razi University students*. Master's thesis, Behzisti University.
- Soleimani Khashab, A. (1391). *Investigating the mediation effect of spirituality and religiosity in relation to the prediction of resilience by five personality factors*. Master's thesis in educational psychology, Shiraz University.
- Strumpfer, D. (2001). Psychometric properties of an instrument to measure resilience in adults. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 31 (1).