

# Relationship between the Religious Attitude, Self-Efficacy, and Life Satisfaction in High school Teachers of Mahshahr City

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the religious attitude, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction in high school teachers of Mahshahr City. To this end, 253 people of all high school teachers in Mahshahr City, in Iran were selected as the sample using the multistage cluster sampling method. For data collection, Glock and Stark's (1965) religious attitude questionnaires, Schwartz and Jerusalem's general self-efficacy questionnaire and Diener et al.'s (1985) life satisfaction questionnaire were used. For data analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. Results showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction. In addition, there is a meaningful relationship between the religious attitude and self-efficacy. Results also showed that religious attitude and self-efficacy can predict the life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** religious attitude, self-efficacy, life satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

Life satisfaction shows the people's positive attitude towards a world in which they live and this is frequently their main objective during their lives (Hojat-Panah & Ranjbar-Kohan, 2013). Philosophers and intellectuals believe that a number of features such as love, wisdom and independence are the basic components of life satisfaction (Bayani et al., 2007), but further studies have shown that religion and spirituality have a positive effect on the mental and physical health (Bakhsipour-Roudsari, 2008). Religious beliefs, rituals, and obligations are related to the positive results such as improved quality, better life, welfare, physical and mental health, marital satisfaction, sustainable life, and positive performance (Seybold & Hill, 2001). The positive religious attitude leads to life satisfaction and life satisfaction is one of the predictors of mental health (Lelkes, 2006). In this regard, Lawler-Row and Elliott (2009) investigated the role of religion and spirituality on health, satisfaction, and well-being of the old people. The results indicated that spirituality is a significant predictor of the psychological well-being, physical and mental health, as well as depression reduction. Moreover, Okulicz-Kozaryn (2009) showed that there is a relationship between the religious dimensions and life satisfaction; and religious people are more satisfied. Moslehi and Ahmadi (2013) studied the role of religious life in marital satisfaction and showed that the couples both of whom are religious are more satisfied than the couples one of whom is religious; and the latter, are more satisfied than the couples none of whom is religious. However, the results of Mirkhan (2014) showed that there is not a positive relationship between religious attitudes and life satisfaction has not been verified.

Everybody experiences the problems. The way people control and solve these problems depends on their personality. People's beliefs play an important role in their lives. In fact, they are the basis of the people's psychological life that helps them to make different decisions in different situations (Gholami, 2009). Self-efficacy is one of the main components of the people's competence. People's performance (weak, moderate, and strong) with similar skills in different situations or even individual performance in various circumstances depends on the changes of their beliefs on self-efficacy. Therefore, self-efficacy helps people to conduct extraordinary tasks using their skills (Soleimani & Howaida, 2013). It may be said that difference in life satisfaction is the result of the people's ability to process different stress factors (Ganji-Arjangi & Farahani, 2008). Thus, self-efficacy is one of the factors affecting life satisfaction that determines the extent to which people spend their time on conducting their tasks, resist against the problems, and show reflexivity in various situations. In fact, self-efficacy is a critical factor in the success or failure in whole life (Bagheri et al., 2013).

People with low self-efficacy feel they fail to control the life events and therefore feel helpless and incapable when facing the problems and if their primary solutions are ineffective in dealing with the problems, they immediately lose hope (Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005). Bandura (1981) believes that a sense of self-efficacy can play an important role in a person's perspective on the objectives, tasks and challenges (Cain et al., 2008). Lent et al. (2009) in a study on the social cognitive predictors of academic adaptation and life satisfaction on Portugal students concluded that the efficacy and environmental protection predict the academic adaptation, goals setting, life satisfaction. Kim & Park (1999) showed that there is a direct relationship between the self-efficacy and life satisfaction. In other words, those who consider themselves more efficient are more successful and more satisfied with their life (quoted Mortazavi, 2014). Mohammadi-Ramaghani (2014) indicated that the relationship between life satisfaction and self-efficacy and academic burnout are positive and negative, respectively and is statistically significant. Mikaeili-Mani and Mohana (2013) studied the relationship between perceptions of school climate and self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The results showed that perceptions of school climate and efficacy are significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Therefore, with regard to the importance of religious attitude and self-efficacy and its effects on all aspects of human life, the assessment of their relationship with the people's life is notably important. This study aims to investigate the relationship between the religious attitude, self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

### *1.1 Research Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1: there is a relationship between the relationship and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 1-1: there is a relationship between religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 1-2: there is a relationship between emotional dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 1-3: there is a relationship between consequential dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 1-4: there is a relationship between the ritual dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 2: there is a relationship between the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 2-1: there is a relationship between the sympathy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 2-2: there is a relationship between the self-respect and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 2-3: there is a relationship between the responsibility and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

Hypothesis 3: there is a relationship between the self-efficacy and religious attitude of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Statistical Population*

The research method was a descriptive study kind of correlation. Statistical Population consists of all 626 high school teachers of Mahshahr City (cited by Education Department of Mahshahr City).

### *2.2 Statistical Sampling and Sampling Method*

For calculating the sample size, Krejcie and Morgan's table (1970) was used and the sample size was 242 people. By considering the loss possibility, 270 questionnaires were distributed, of which, 260 were responded. Seven questionnaires were distorted and therefore were excluded of the analysis. Other 253 questionnaires were considered as the sample size and analyzed.

### *2.3 Research Instruments*

#### *2.3.1 Glock and Stark's (1965) Religious Attitude Questionnaire*

It was designed for measuring the religious attitudes and beliefs in 1965 and was implemented for standardizing in different European, American, African, and Asian countries for followers of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

This questionnaire was first translated by Serajzadeh (1998) and for Iranian society. This five dimensional scale includes doctrinal, emotional, consequential, ritual, and intellectual. The questionnaire used in this study contains four dimensions of the above dimensions and the intellectual dimension has been excluded due to the wide range of propaganda in Iran (Mohammadi et al., 2014). The questionnaire has 26 items in four dimensions of doctrinal (7 items, questions 1-7), emotional (6 items, questions 8-13), consequential (6 items, questions 14-19) and ritual (7 items, questions 20-26). Five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) was used in this study with values of 0-4. Numerical sum shows the value of each item in the total score of the subject that fluctuates between 0-104. The last performance of this test on questionnaire's overall alpha students was 0.83 (ibid.). This test is valid because it is standard. Cronbach's alpha values in the study by Serajzadeh and Pouyafar (2008) was 0.81, 0.75, 0.72, and 0.83 for doctrinal, emotional, consequential, and ritual dimensions, respectively. Ahankoob (2009) reported the acceptable validity and reliability of the test. In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha that was 0.74, 0.75, 0.78, 0.72, and 0.70 for doctrinal, emotional, consequential, ritual dimensions, respectively.

### 2.3.2 Schwartz & Jerusalem's General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed by Schwartz and Jerusalem in 1992 with 10 items that show the peoples successful adaptation with the troublesome situations. There are four choices for each item ranging from *very much like me* to *not like me at all* with scores of 1-4. Therefore, the minimum score of this questionnaire for each person is 10 and the maximum is 40 (Tajali & Ardalan, 2010). Schwartz et al. (2000; quoted in Rajabi, 2006) obtained the validity of the scale with an optimistic attribution style in a group of the students as 0.49, with the perception of the challenges in the stressful situations as 0.45, and for teachers with self-regulation as 0.58 that all of these were significant. Schwartz reported the reliability of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.83 (quoted in Mahdizadeh-Gandavani et al., 2013). Furthermore, Fooladchang (2003) in his self-correlation study used this questionnaire with the academic self-efficacy scale as an indicator of the validity and reported the correlation value as 0.56. This tool consists of three subscales of empathy, self-respect and responsibility (Jaba-Abbadi, 2013). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha and was 0.81, 0.72, 0.84, and 0.84 for self-efficacy, sympathy, self-respect, and responsibility, respectively.

### 2.3.3 Diener et al.'s (1985) Life Satisfaction Questionnaire

This five-item scale was developed by Diener et al. (1985) for measuring the total life satisfaction. They reported the acceptable validity (using the convergent and divergent method) and reliability (Cronbach alpha as 0.85) of this scale. Five-point Likert scale (*completely satisfied* to *completely dissatisfied*) was used in this study with values of 0-4 (quoted in Askari et al, 2013). Khayer and Samani (2004) domesticated this scale for Iran and there are evidences that confirm its reliability and validity (Jokar & Nasiri, 2007). Jokar and Nasiri (2007) reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of this scale as 0.80. Bayani et al (2007) reported the validity of this scale using Cronbach alpha and test-retest as 0.83 and 0.69, respectively. Moreover, Askari et al. (2013) reported the test reliability using Cronbach alpha reliability as 0.83. Reliability coefficient was 0.79 in the present study using the Cronbach alpha and the confidence coefficient of the life satisfaction was 0.79.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Descriptive Results

Table 1. Central indicators and distribution of the variables of religious attitude, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction based on the gender

Variable	Gender	Mean	Min	Max	SD	N
Religious attitudes	Male	2.94	2.03	3.57	0.37	166
	Female	3.17	2.61	3.65	0.27	87
Faithfulness	Male	3.60	2	4	0.49	166
	Female	3.78	3	4	0.25	87
Emotional	Male	3.43	2.17	4	0.46	166
	Female	3.64	2.83	4	0.37	87
Consequence	Male	2.57	1	4	0.69	166

	Female	2.76	1.33	3.50	0.54	87
Ceremonial aspects	Male	2.16	1.29	3	0.41	166
	Female	2.56	1.57	3.71	0.56	87
Self Efficacy	Male	29.56	19	40	4.68	166
	Female	31.05	18	40	5.26	87
Empathy	Male	8.29	4	12	1.91	166
	Female	9.02	5	12	1.71	87
Self-respect	Male	11.57	7	16	2.07	166
	Female	11.85	6	16	2.33	87
Self-responsibility	Male	9.69	7	12	1.27	166
	Female	10.17	5	12	1.74	87
Life satisfaction	Male	4.89	2	7	1.30	166
	Female	4.45	1.40	6.80	1.14	87

Table 1, shows the central indicators (mean and mode) and distribution (minimum and maximum, SD) of the variables of religious attitude, self-efficacy and life satisfaction based on the gender.

### 3.2 Inferential Results

Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used for investigating the relationships between variables and testing the research hypotheses.

### 3.3 Testing the First Hypothesis and Its Sub-Hypotheses

Main first hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses were tested using the simple correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows the results of correlation coefficient between religious attitudes and life satisfaction.

Table 2. The results of simple correlation coefficient between religious attitudes and life satisfaction of the high school teachers of Mahshahr City

	Variable	r	Sig	N
	Religious attitudes	0.168	0.007	
	Faithfulness	0.186	0.003	
Life satisfaction	Emotional	0.238	0.000	235
	Consequence	0.021	0.745	
	Ceremonial aspects	0.082	0.195	

As shown in Table 2, there is a positive and significant relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.168$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed. There is a positive and significant relationship between the doctrinal dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.186$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). There is a positive and significant relationship between the emotional dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.238$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). There is a positive but not significant relationship between the consequential dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 95% ( $r=0.021$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). There is a positive but not significant relationship between the ritual dimension of religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 95% ( $r=0.082$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 1-1 and hypothesis 1-2 are confirmed in the confidence level of 99% and hypothesis 1-3 and hypothesis 1-4 are not confirmed at the confidence level of 95%.

### 3.4 Testing the Second Hypothesis and Its Sub-Hypotheses

Table 3 shows the results of correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

Table 3. The results of simple correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and life satisfaction

	Variable	r	Sig	N
Life satisfaction	Self Efficacy	0.199	0.001	235
	Empathy	0.116	0.066	
	Self-respect	0.279	0.000	
	self-responsibility	0.110	0.080	

As shown in table 3, there is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.199$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, the second hypothesis is confirmed. There is a positive but not significant relationship between the sympathy dimension of self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 95% ( $r=0.116$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). There is a positive and significant relationship between the self-respect dimension and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.279$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). There is a positive but not significant relationship between the responsibility dimension of self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 95% ( $r=0.110$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 2-2 in the confidence level of 99% and hypothesis 2-1 in the confidence level of 95% are not confirmed.

### 3.5 Testing the Third Hypothesis

Table 4 shows the results of multiple regressions (simultaneous and stepwise) between the criterion variable (life satisfaction) and predictor variable (religious attitude and self-efficacy).

Table 4. Results of regression (multiple correlation coefficients) of the predictor variables (religious attitude and self-efficacy) and variable of life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City

Method	Predictor variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	fisher's	sig	$\beta$	t	Sig
Simultaneous	Religious attitudes	0.311	0.091	6.637	0.000	0.115	2.754	0.007
	Self Efficacy					0.214	3.113	0.001
Stage	Self Efficacy	0.311	0.091	6.637	0.000	0.214	3.113	0.001
	Religious attitudes					0.115	2.754	0.007

As shown in table 4, predictor regression of the life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City is significant based on the variables of the religious attitude and self-efficacy ( $F=6.637$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). There is a positive and significant relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City ( $\beta=0.155$ ,  $t=2.754$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

There is a positive and significant relationship between the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City ( $\beta=0.214$ ,  $t=3.113$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Analyzing the value of  $R^2$  shows that the predictor variables explain 9.1 % of the changes of the criterion variable (life satisfaction of Mahshahr City). Additionally, results of the stepwise regression shows that predictor variables of the self-efficacy and religious attitude are predictors of the variable life satisfaction of the high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

## 4. Discussion

Life satisfaction shows the way respondents assess their lives and focuses on this continuous assessment. Life satisfaction includes the individual evaluations of the present and past life. Moreover, includes the emotional reactions to the events, mental moods and their judgments regarding the extent of their life satisfaction, perfection, and marital and job satisfaction (Myers, 2000). This study aimed to examine the relationship between religious attitudes, self-efficacy, and the life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City.

The results of first hypothesis and its sub-hypothesis showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction of Mahshahr City in the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.168$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). On the contrary, Brown and Tierney (2009) showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction of the old people. The results of the study by Mirkhan (2014) rejected the positive relationship between the religious attitude and life satisfaction. However, these results are

consistent with the previous studies such as Moltafet et al. (2010), Lawler-Row and Elliott (2009), Okulicz-Kozaryn (2009), Saundra and Hughey (2003), Krause (2003), Swinyard, Kau, and Phua (2001), Fabricator, Handle, and Fenzel (2000), Myers (2000), Asghari and Ghasemi-Joobneh (2014), Moslehi and Ahmadi (2013), Abdollahoor and Manavipoor (2008), Khodayarifard et al. (2007) and Hadianfard (2005).

As Asghari and Ghasemi-Joobneh (2014) show, religion plays a crucial role in individual and social aspects of life. People who seek for God's satisfaction are more satisfied with their lives (Moslehi & Ahmadi, 2013). Pakizeh (2009) states that the religious people believe in God and worship Him. Religious attitudes and beliefs affect the cognitive components of the people including their interpretation of the events, optimism or pessimism and their thoughts and these components affect the welfare and mental and physical health using the immune system. Therefore, people who have religious attitudes are more satisfied with their lives.

The results of the second hypothesis showed the positive and significant relationship between the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of high school teachers of Mahshahr City at the confidence level of 99% ( $r=0.199$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, the third research hypothesis is confirmed. The results of this hypothesis testing is consistent with those of Lent et al. (2009), Karademase (2006), Mohammadi-Ramaghani (2014), Mikaeili-Mani and Mohana (2013), Bagheri et al. (2013) Ganji-Arjangi and Farahani (2008), and Ahadi et al. (2008). On the contrary, Arasteh (2012) showed that there is no significant relationship between the self-efficacy and life satisfaction in the divorced women.

As Ganji-Arjangi and Farahani (2008) explain, self-efficacy affects the personal perception of control. Therefore, people with high self-efficacy more likely believe their high level of self-confidence and life satisfaction and less feel stress or anxiety as the health threatening factors. Self-efficacy depends on controlling the stresses, high self-esteem, physical and mental health, and higher adaptation and high resistance to the severe diseases. According to Karademase (2006), self-efficacy expectations are as the representation of the self-ability that leads to optimism. Optimism is effective in predicting the different aspects of the mental health and lead to the life satisfaction. Self-efficacy reduces the passivity, increases the individual compatibility to cope with the problems and challenges, helps people to control the interpersonal relationships, and finally predicts and leads to life satisfaction.

The results of the analysis of third hypothesis showed that the religious attitude and self-efficacy predict the life satisfaction. Satisfaction means the positive feeling about the life aspects such as family, jobs and so on. Individual satisfaction and welfare is affected by the self-awareness, optimism, and spiritualism. In other words, the more people are more conscious, more optimistic, and more spiritual, the more they are satisfied (Marashian & Esmaili, 2012). Therefore, religious attitude is one of the influential factors on life satisfaction. Previous studies on the followers of Christianity shows a high correlation between the life satisfaction and religious attitudes. Moreover, the strong relationships and Deism indicate the strong religious beliefs that play an important role in life satisfaction of the people (Donavan & Halpern, 2002; quoted in Ebrahimi-Koohbanani, 2011). All people experiences the problems. The way people cope with these problems depends on their personal characteristics. Self-efficacy helps people to conduct extraordinary tasks using their problem-solving skills. Self-efficacy is related to the people's beliefs on their capabilities for controlling their performances and events that affect their lives.

## 5. Conclusion

There were limitations for conducting this study. For example, the research sample consisted of the high school teachers of Mahshahr City and only the degrees of correlation of the research variables have been investigated. The lack of analysis of all factors affecting the life satisfaction is another limitation of the present study. Finally, it is noteworthy that religious beliefs are of main predictors of life satisfaction. Therefore, the officials of the Education Department of Mahshahr City should consider the religious programs for the high school teachers in addition to their educational programs in order to increase the educational quality. Moreover, with regard to the importance of the self-efficacy and its role in predicting the life satisfaction, mental health experts and psychologists should deal with this component from people's childhood.

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