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Comparing attachment to god and identity styles and psychological well-being in married teachers: With regard to demographic factors

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to compare attachment to God and identity styles and psychological well-being in married teachers with regard to demographic factors including gender and teaching level. The research method is descriptive and ex-post facto type. The research population involves all married teachers of Mashhad city in year 2013 who were studying in Farhangian university of Khorasan Razavi. 330 people, who were selected by using simple random sampling method, responded to Ryff psychological wellbeing, ISI identity styles and Sim and Loh attachment to God questionnaires. The data were analyzed in descriptive like frequency, average, standard deviation and inference statistic such as independent T-test with SPSS-20 statistic program. The results show that the average scores of attachment to God, psychological well-being and informational identity style have significant difference in male and female teachers (P<0/01). Nevertheless, the average scores of normative and avoidant/diffusive identity styles don't have significant difference in male and female teachers. Also the results suggested that there is not a significant difference in the average scores of none of research variables among teachers with different teaching level.

Keywords: attachment to God, identity styles, psychological well-being, married teachers, demogeraphic factors;

1. Introduction

Although psychological well-being has been extensively evaluated (e.g., Diener, 1984; Diener & Emmons, 1984), when it comes to articulating the basic structure of psychological well-being, the researchers always center

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the discussions around the distinction between positive and negative affect and life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bradburn, 1969; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Liang, 1984,1985, quoted by Tang, 2008). Diener (1984) grouped the definition of wellbeing into three categories. Firstly, wellbeing is defined by external criteria such as virtue or holiness. In this normative definition, wellbeing is not thought as a subjective state but rather as one possessing some desirable qualities. Secondly, social scientists have focused on the question of what leads people to evaluate their lives in positive terms. This definition of wellbeing has come to be labeled life satisfaction and relies on the respondents to determine what a good life is. Thirdly, the meaning of wellbeing comes closest to the way the term is used in everyday discourse and denotes a preponderance of positive over negative affect (Bradburn, 1969), which emphasizes pleasant emotional experiences (quoted by Tang, 2008). Ryff (1995) distinguished two primary conceptions for the study of psychological wellbeing for more than 20 years (quoted by Tang, 2008). The first primary conception, traceable to Bradburn's (1969) study, distinguished psychological wellbeing between positive and negative affect and defined happiness as the balance between the two parts. The second primary conception has gained prominence among sociologists, which emphasizes life satisfaction as the key indicator of psychological well-being. Many scholars (Andrews & McKennell, 1980; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976) viewed life satisfaction as a cognitive component and concluded the more affective dimension of positive functioning. Researchers (Boey & Chiu, 1998) in the field of psychological well-being agreed that psychological wellbeing generally consists of two important aspects, namely positive and negative affect. Hence, both positive mental health (e.g. happiness and life satisfaction) and mental ill-health (e.g. anxiety and depression) are taken into account in the evaluation and measurement of psychological wellbeing. Ryff (1989) takes psychological wellbeing as an attempt to realize the potential abilities of an individual, or in other words progress of the potential and real talents of every person. He states 6 components for psychological well-being involving: 1- self acceptance: means positive attitude to one self and accept the diverse aspects of own self like bad and good traits and have positive feeling about the past life. 2- Positive relations with others: have a sense of satisfaction and intimacy in one's relations with others and comprehend the importance of these dependencies. 3- Autonomy: sense of having independency and impression in life events and the active role in behaviors. 4- Environmental mastering: means sense of mastery on environment, control the outer activities and take benefit of surrounding opportunities. 5- Purpose in life: having a goal in life and believing that there is a meaning in the past and present life. 6- Personal growth: feeling of having continuing growth and achieving the novel experiences as a creator with potential talents (Ryff, Singer, 1998; quoted by Khajeh, 2012).

The factors influencing or having relationship with psychological well-being are surveyed in different studies. One of the factors that its effect and relationship with psychological well-being is mentioned in diverse researches is the identity issue, especially the identity styles (Bersonsky, 1990; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005; Shokri and et.al, 2007; Siahpoosh and et.al, 2007). According to Erikson (1968), a sense of identity emerges as the adolescent copes with social demands and developmental challenges, and attempts to give meaning to his choices and commitments of his life (Erikson, 1968). Erikson (1968) postulates that beginning in adolescence and possibly continuing through early adulthood individuals experience a "crisis" which is a process of exploration of their sense of who they are, including their values, beliefs and behaviors (Erikson, 1968). This psychological process of self exploration is usually accompanied by some emotional discomfort and involves an evaluation of possible alternatives to their current sense of self. Erikson (1968) suggests that as a result of this self exploration and the evaluation of alternatives, new values, beliefs, and goals are integrated into a person's sense of self and individuals become committed to this new sense of self (Erikson, 1968). This commitment allows the individual to achieve a sense of ego identity. This ego identity provides the individual with a sense of purpose and direction and an ongoing sense of which he or she is that is necessary for his or her optimal functioning as an adult. Berzonsky (1990) has identified three social-cognitive processing orientations or styles: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. An informational style is typical of adolescents who seek out and evaluate self-related information actively. This style is positively associated with cognitive complexity, self-reflection, problem-oriented coping style, rational epistemic style, and consciousness, planning, decision-making, and highest level of self-esteem, psychological wellbeing, academic autonomy and goal-directedness (Berzonsky, 2005, Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi and Kinny, 1997, Berzonsky and Kuk, 2000, dollinger, 1995). Adolescents with a normative identity style rely on the expectations, values, and prescriptions held by significant others when confronting identity relevant problems (Berzonsky, 1990). They possess stable and foreclosed self-concepts, are inflexible in encountering ambiguous situations and have a