

Spirituality and Religion

An Empirical Study Using a Turkish Muslim Sample

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Introduction

According to some scholars, it is impossible to understand a human being solely by looking at the *self* from a non-transcendental perspective (Nelson, 2009). In order to fully understand *the whole person*, there are two concepts that cannot be ignored: religion and spirituality (Kirkpatrick, 1999), owing to the fact that religion (including spirituality) is of great significance to human beings in most cultures (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003). One of the most influential factors on the cognition, affect, motivation, and behaviour of people is their spiritual and/or religious goals, beliefs, and practices (Emmons, 2001). Religion has been one of the most significant areas in social scientific thinking, especially after the late 19th century (Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson et al., 2000). Spirituality was incorporated into the field of psychology and was added to the list of terms in the computerized database of the American Psychological Association in 1988 (Helminiak, 2006). In the last few decades, the scientific and popular interest in the concept of spirituality has risen and continues to increase (Roof, 1993; Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999) even despite the fact that spirituality remains, for many, a fuzzy concept (Spilka, 1993).

Religion and spirituality have a profound relationship; that they are both grounded in faith, is a common feature (Damon & Lerner, 2006). Therefore, they are related and intertwined (Streib & Hood, 2008), interrelated and interchangeable (Moberg, 2010) and thus need not be seen as in opposition to each other (Damon & Lerner, 2006). They can appear as overlapping constructs, having both shared and uncommon features (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). However, it is explicitly stated that spirituality is not synonymous with religion (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Hayes, 1984) and that experiences of transcendence occur in secular-nonbelieving individuals as well (Coleman, Silver & Holcombe, 2013).

Over time, spirituality has been separated from religious tradition. A few decades ago, the sacred was mainly regarded as being related to religion (Principe, 1983; Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2005); and the concept of

religiousness covered today's definitions of spirituality (Pargament, 2007). However, spirituality today has become known as a psychological phenomenon, and a research subject, distinct from religiosity (Saroglou & Munoz-Garcia, 2008). In recent decades, with the rise of secularism (Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich et al., 1997; Coleman, 2013) and the transformation of social identities by modernity (Carrette & King, 2005), 'religious individualism' has gained significance. Most Americans supported the idea of following their faith and beliefs while at the same time seeing them as independent from religious institutions, such as places of worship or churches. Furthermore, the authority derived from these institutions in the social sphere has also diminished. Religious forces (e.g. church and clerical law) that have proved socially cohesive and relevant in the past have, in many cases, given way to secular equivalents (e.g. police and secular law) (Coleman, 2014); yet still, a more individualized religiosity persists. As denominational affiliation was no longer dictated by attendance, Christians and Jews could be considered good without attending church or synagogue. In this new age of extremely privatized religion, a need for new alternative perspectives on belief in popular thinking has produced "spirituality" as distinguished from religiosity as subjective reality (Roof, 2003). Spirituality has become a contemporary alternative to religion in a society that is made up of a variety of beliefs all converging on the individual (Loewenthal, 2008). In short, over the past forty years, the conceptual meanings of both religion and spirituality have changed dramatically.

Some contemporary theorists have polarized the terms 'religion and spirituality'. Often, religion is conceptualized as organized, institutional, dogmatic, substantive, restrictive, negative, and mundane (i.e. 'harmful religion') – versus a more positive characterization of spirituality as personal, subjective, functional, life enhancing, and helpful (Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999; Pargament & Annette, 2002). In the process of searching for the sacred – which is the common aim – religiosity is a sociological phenomenon requiring affiliation and involvement with a religious tradition and participation in religious activities. It refers to group or social practices and doctrines, whereas spirituality is psychological, involving personal beliefs, values, behaviour and experiences (McCullough, Smith & Poll, 2003; Hood, Hill & Spilka, 2009). Religion is perceived as denominational, external, cognitive, behavioural, ritualistic, and public; while spirituality is seen as more universal, ecumenical, internal, affective, spontaneous, and private (Ho & Ho, 2007). To some, religion is more comprehensive than spirituality (Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich et al., 1997) and spirituality may be the source and heart of religion (Hayes, 1984; Salarzehi, Aramesh & Mohammadi, 2011). On the other hand, some scholars affirm that spirituality is more extensive and superior (Emblen, 1992;