



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2017; 3(2): 420-421
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 05-12-2016
Accepted: 07-01-2017

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Assessment of spirituality and old age

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Abstract

The spirituality and old age takes place through the capacity to bear the limitations and difficulties. The concepts that older people have of spirituality and how this old age peoples depend on spirituality. This showed of relationship between spirituality and who are living in old age peoples. The latter is support, relationship with the sacred and Transcendence from religion, which is defined by both of cultural and religious. The assessment has losses inherent to the process, thus, the nature of living a spiritual life was observed to be heterogeneous, while all the recognition of its important and involves. The relationship of the individual with what is beyond oneself what is transcendent and religion is related to more restricted aspects of this relationship between spirituality and old age. It was found both male and female groups were not different on the spiritual aspect.

Keywords: Assessment, Spirituality and Old age

1. Introduction

Old age and spirituality are themes that have long been far from the center of interest of scientific discussions. Old age was considered only as the final stage of life [1]; and spirituality – the quest for the meaning of life - was always seen as something in the contrary direction to the rationality of science. The recognition by the World Health Organization of the importance of spirituality for quality of life led to inclusion of these domains in the assessment and promotion of health at all phases and ages.

The study of the association between spirituality and old age is still incipient and to understand this phenomenon it is necessary to look not only in quantitative terms of data, but to look more deeply, qualitatively, at the means of the terms, and their relationships, for older people. Being aware of the complexity of the human being and the possibilities of widening of knowledge in the phase of old age, this study seeks to establish and analyze what is the older person's conception. It also aims to identify the meanings of religion/religiosity, and also the relationship between aging and spirituality.

All the speeches that relate to the Transcendental are in the direction of the relationship with what is beyond the visible. This strength emerges from the individual and connects him/her with something greater, it can take place through the relationship with other people, the sacred or the Universe. It also relates to the elderly person's capacity to go beyond his own limitations, not only physical, but also of understanding of the world, of being and of existing.

The term Spirituality, in the speech of some participants is not always unlinked from aspects of religion; but this spiritual contact and direction make it possible for the individual who is aging to reflect on him/herself. The connection between what is within and what is outside and/or above oneself favors growth of the individual and expansion of his/her consciousness, as some have pointed out.

There is a social interaction that takes place when the individual is involved in religion, enabling the exchange of information between the group; the sense of belonging enables the individual to have the perception that his feelings are understood and accepted, which leads to a feeling of welcome, acceptance and support. Most older people consider that the terms *spirituality* and *religion* are not synonymous, but they do not use a specific identification to differentiate them. However, there is a consensus that spirituality does not depend on religion. Jasmine, 79, refers to Spirituality as something more 'flexible and free', which cannot be imposed, as tends to happen with religion.

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By using the term ‘religiosity’, this participant presents his/her view on spirituality; the two expressions are often used as synonyms in empirical studies.

For those interviewed, there is the possibility of professing a religion, without this meaning that one has a spiritual life; and the contrary can also occur. This comprehension that there is a relationship or a superimposition between the terms does not denote a requirement that for spiritual life to take place there has to exist a religious practice; and this is underlined and strengthened both by the elderly participants and by the literature. The importance given to Spirituality by the interviewees stands out, since all the participants recognize it as important in their lives, in different levels of intensity and attribution of value, and it is lived by all in its practical and subjective aspects.

The ways of living spirituality can be both institutional and through internal experience. For the majority of the interviewees, reading of the Bible, books and magazines related to the religion professed is frequent and develops positive feelings and emotions in all those who practice it. These data corroborate what Souza revealed in his study on the profile and importance given to religion by old people living in the municipality of São Paulo: 100% of the participants read the Bible, which was the grounds for their beliefs, and made possible a self-reflection.

Researchers have studied the relationship between spirituality and anxiety in several different populations, with the notable exception of adolescents. Kaczorowski (1989)^[1] investigated this relationship in adults who had been diagnosed with cancer using the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, which distinguishes between the religious and existential dimensions of spirituality, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory which differentiates between transitory (state) and characteristic (trait) anxiety. An inverse relationship was found between spiritual well-being and state-trait (total) anxiety. This finding held true when controlling for age, gender and marital status (bid).

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

Two groups of old age participants were selected randomly from different areas of Rewa. The total respondents were 100; among them 50 were male and female participants (age ranging from 60 to 80 years). The subjects of the sample were taken from upper caste Hindu community, belonging to middle socio-economic group. Data was collected on different locations depending on the availability of the sample like public parks, different temples, colleges and living areas.

2.2 Tools

Hindi language version of Bhushan's (1971)^[2] religiosity scale was used to measure religiosity of both the groups. The 5 point Likert type religiosity scale consists of 36 items. The content, test retest reliability, predictive and concurrent validity coefficients reported by Bhushan were found to be satisfactorily high.

‘Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale’ by Underwood & Teresi (2002)^[3] was used to measure the spirituality of both the groups. The internal consistency, reliability and validity of the scale are reported to be high. This scale consists of 16 items, 14 of which are to be responded on a scale of 6 responses, from ‘many times a day’ to ‘never’. The remaining 2 items which show closeness with God of the

individual have 4 responses, from ‘not at all close’ to ‘as close as possible’.

‘Sinha Anxiety Scale’, constructed by D. Sinha (1968)^[4] was used to measure anxiety of both the groups in the present study. The scale is a reliable and valid measure of anxiety in the field of psychological research. It consists of 100 items related to the anxiety of the individual in different aspects of life like society, family, friend circle, self-personality, self-analysis, service area and future plans. Responses are made in the form of ‘true’ or ‘false’.

2.3 Procedure

Following the rapport building, the participants of the study responded to the spirituality scale. The scores of the inventories were used to find out the results

2.4 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was done using SPSS 16.0 version. Bivariate coefficient correlation was done to see the relationship between different variables and t test was used to calculate the mean difference between groups on stated variables.

3. Results & Discussion

Table 1: Mean difference between male and female participants on spirituality status.

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	±SD	t	df
spiritual status	Male	50	55.64	21.659	.043	98
	Female	50	55.82	20.259		

**significant at .01 level

Further the table shows an insignificant difference between the mean scores of male and female participants on spiritual aspect. The insignificant t value that is $t=.043$ indicates that the mean scores of male and female participants on spirituality do not differ significantly.

Thus, what comes to the fore from the above discussion is the fact that the concepts of spirituality in very closely linked to each other, and difference in one leads to change in the other in terms of different age groups.

4. Acknowledgement

The author is greatly indebted to HOD of Psychology, A.P.S. University, Rewa (M.P.) who permitted to carry out this work at the centre.

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