

Predicting the Happiness of Adolescents Based on Coping Styles and Religious Attitudes

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Abstract The study aimed to predict the happiness of adolescents based on coping styles and religious attitudes. To this end, the correlational research methodology was used. In total, 381 subjects were selected from adolescents of Semnan (Eastern province of Iran), using multistage clustering sampling method. Research tools were Ways of Coping Questionnaire by Lazarus, Golriz and Barahani's Religious Attitude Questionnaire, and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. Data analysis was performed in SPSS using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. Results of Pearson's correlation demonstrated a significant positive relationship between happiness of adolescents and variables of problem-focused coping styles ($r = 0.31$, $P < 0.01$) and religious attitudes ($r = 0.129$, $P < 0.05$). Meanwhile, a negative significant association was observed between emotion-focused coping styles and happiness ($r = -0.184$, $P < 0.01$). Moreover, results of multiple regression analysis indicated that the listed variables explained 17% of the variance of happiness in totality. According to the results, it is recommended that use of problem-focused styles be emphasized in addition to strengthening of religious attitudes to increase the happiness of adolescents.

Keywords Religious attitudes · Problem-focused coping styles · Emotion-focused coping strategies · Happiness

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Introduction

In 1998, Seligman coined the term positive psychology, which is a tendency to evaluate the positive aspects of human existence, seeking to use the strengths of humans as a shield against diseases (Strumpfer 2006; Moltafet et al. 2010). One of the most fundamental concepts in positive psychology movement is happiness (Lesani and Sharifi Yazdi 2014). In this regard, studies have considered this notion as a considerable issue in recent decades (Angner et al. 2010). Today, it is considered as one of the most important issues in academic research. However, despite the conducted studies in this area, further research is required to fully interpret happiness (Schimmel 2009).

Historical evidences, as well as, everyday life experience, suggest that the most prominent and major human desire is achieving well-being and happiness (Hadyanfarad 2005), which reflects numerous positive outcomes in life of people. Positive outcomes of happiness include its direct impact on cognitive, physical and psychological functions (Ziapour et al. 2014), life satisfaction, and enhanced emotional balance and performance in life (Abolmaali et al. 2014).

Typically, happiness is defined as joy or happy modes (positive emotions), life satisfaction and absence of depression and anxiety (negative elements) (Stewart et al. 2010). In other words, happiness is interpreted as a positive value for individuals (Veenhoven 1997). In this regard, two aspects are regarded, including emotional components, which show the emotional experience of happiness, joy, and other positive emotions, and cognitive evaluation of satisfaction of different aspects of life, which reveals psychological well-being and happiness (Andrews and McKannell 1980). Happiness is the most important part of quality of life and is considered beyond any wealth (Ziapour et al. 2014).

There has been a great debate over happiness and its influential factors. According to verses and hadiths, happiness is of great importance in the sight of God (Bahri Najafi and Mehrshad Jafari 2015). The divine religions refer to several recommendations, including patience in the face of adversities, believing in fate and God, following the approaches of prophets and saints, which brings peace of mind and spirit, participation in religious activities, which leads to the feeling of acceptance and social support for people, and social support, which increases incentive to withstand difficulties in life (Afshinmehr et al. 2014). Pursuing these recommendations can be associated with satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, the religion attitude toward happiness is a purposeful approach (Bahri Najafi and Mehrshad Jafari 2015), and true happiness can lead to the realization of the light of faith and relationship with God. Moreover, Allah has mentioned an exact path in Quran to reach multifacet mental and physical happiness in this world and the Hereafter (Ismail and Haron 2014).

Religious attitudes are certain aspects of religiosity with an important role in mental health of an individual, protecting him against depression (Kate et al. 2010) and bringing satisfaction with life (Joshnloo and Weijers 2013; Salahodjaev 2014). In the past two decades, extensive research has shown the relationship between stressful events and variables of religion, spirituality, and coping styles (Pargament et al. 2013). The main element of spirituality is bonding with God, which provides the means for supporting, safeguarding and comforting people during stressful event of life (Ghobary Bonab et al. 2013). Furthermore, this link serves as a defense mechanism for humans (Phillips et al. 2014). Religious behaviors increase the subjective well-being of human beings (Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott 2013). People with greater religious attitudes are more prone to experiencing the true meaning of life, which in turn leads to frequent use of effective coping strategies in different situations (Krok 2015a).

Religion is an important part of lives of millions of people around the world (Willard and Norenzayan 2013), affecting all aspects of human life, especially mental health. Therefore, religion can play a vital role in the formation of attitude of individuals toward the life stressors (Forouhari et al. 2014). Accordingly, several researchers have introduced the role of spirituality as a defensive shield against destructive and harmful factors and stressful life events, considering spirituality as the most powerful source of meaning in life (Park 2007, 2013a). Meaning in life is considered as a vital element in religious coping and mental well-being, used by people as a part of the semantic (conceptual) system to deal with problems and challenges of life (Krok 2014a).

Therefore, religious and spiritual beliefs play an important role in coping processes and determining the primary purpose and ultimate motivation of life and leading mankind toward achieving their goals (Park 2013b). According to various results, the critical element of spirituality is the presence of meaning in life (Krok 2015a). In addition, the system of religious beliefs enables individuals to find meaning and purpose in stressful life events (Krok 2014b). This leads to balanced stress level and enhanced mental health, followed by increased positive emotions in individuals.

Religion helps individuals trust God in their stressful life events, which can reduce or prevent psychological pressures (Clements and Ermakova 2012), and be a means to confront the challenges and stressors of life (Abu-Raiya et al. 2011). According to the literature, there is a positive relationship between religious attitudes and optimism (Mosallanejad et al. 2013) mainly due to the fact that these attitudes lead to believing in a great source (God), which assists people at all times, especially in stressful situations. Divine religions have provided a framework to solve problems and improve the ability to deal with psychological stressors and inner control source in stressful events (Hefti 2011), and use of appropriate coping strategies when faced with environment stressors.

According to Inglehart (1990) and various surveys carried out in different countries, religious people relatively assess themselves as very happy individuals. Similarly, Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) have marked that happy people respond to life events more positively and consistently and with lower stress levels and a stronger immune system, compared to unhappy people. Moreover, happy individuals use more efficient coping styles to deal with stressful situations.

Numerous studies have focused on the relationship between religious attitudes, coping styles, happiness and different psychological variables and their importance. In a research by Hassanvand Amouzadeh (2016), a significant and positive correlation was found between religious attitudes and quality of life of clients referring to welfare organization. Holder et al. (2010) evaluated the relationship between happiness and spirituality in a study population consisting of 320 children aged 8–12 years in ordinary and religious schools. According to their results, the spirituality of children (not religious activities) was strongly associated with happiness, in a way that children with more spiritual manners were happier. On the other hand, results obtained by Lesani and Sharifi Yazdi (2014) were indicative of a significant and positive relationship between religious beliefs and worshipping the Lord and level of happiness.

In another study, Aliakbari Dehkordi et al. (2015) marked that seniors with religious attitudes had more feelings of happiness and meaning in life and felt less alone, compared to other seniors. Moreover, the results obtained by Sahraian et al. (2013) demonstrated a positive relationship between religious attitude and happiness. In a research conducted by Golshekeh (2015), a significant negative association was observed between religious attitudes and anxiety. Levin (2014), Mashili and Heydari (2015) affirmed that happiness of students was elevated due to increased religious attitudes.

Similarly, other studies have indicated a positive relationship between religious attitude and mental health (Yehya and Dutta 2010; Levin 2010). In addition, there is a direct association between religion and prosperity (Maheshwari and Singh 2009). In a study by Aghili and Kumar (2008), it was concluded that the more religious individuals were more satisfied with their lives, compared to the other participants. In this regard, McClure and Lodden (1982) reported that spending time on religious activities was positively associated with happiness. Moreover, French and Joseph (1999) and Lewis and Cruise (2006) affirmed a positive relationship between being religious and having religious attitude and prosperity.

Results obtained by Francis et al. (2000) demonstrated that church attendance, religious commitment, spirituality, satisfaction through church activities, religious beliefs, and attitudes toward Christianity were positively associated with happiness. In a research by Cohen (2002), it was marked that religious coping, social support, religious identity, spirituality, and religious practices and beliefs were positively correlated with prosperity.

Nevertheless, it is important to note two things about the mentioned relationships: (1) Argyle (2001) conducted a meta-analysis on 56 subjects to evaluate the relationship between religion and happiness, observing a positive, but rather weak, correlation between religious attitude and prosperity, and (2) internal religious orientation affects the happiness of individuals in long term, and not just the fact that a person is religious or not. This is due to the fact that a person might consider himself at the highest level of religion but is not able to use these religious instructions in life to deal with problems and difficulties. In other words, a person can perform religious acts and look like a religious man, but this belief is not internal results of the current research indicated that those with internal religious orientations were more content and satisfied, compared to the other individuals (Aghili and Kumar 2008).

In addition, García-Alandete and Bernabé Valero (2013) and Yeganeh and Shaikhmahmoodi (2013) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between inner religious orientation and mental well-being. In addition, results obtained by Kawa et al. (2015) revealed a positive and significant correlation between inner religious orientation and self-esteem, self-regulation, physical and mental health, satisfaction with life and having meaning and purpose in life.

Coping styles playing a significant role in happiness of mankind. Accordingly, use of more efficient approaches in dealing with stress can result in less damage (Taheri et al. 2013). Furthermore, vulnerability of individuals is affected by their coping strategies against stressors. In stressful events, behaviors such as worshipping, pilgrimage, and trust in God can cause happiness and inner peace in people through creating hope and encouraging positive attitudes. Some techniques, including relying on the help of God in problematic conditions, having a meaning in life, benefiting from social and spiritual supports and a sense of belonging to a sublime source, are applied by religious people to reduce their stress when faced with stressful events. In addition, these individuals employ more appropriate and effective coping styles to deal with stressful life situations, which lead to more happiness and positive emotions. These people use the problem-oriented coping style, which is one of the features of efficient coping styles. This method is regarded as one of the most effective coping strategies (Yang and Mao 2007). In addition, there is a significant and positive correlation between efficient and mature coping strategies and happiness (Jenaabadi and Mohammadi Esfahrood 2014).

In this respect, Khodabakhsh et al. (2015) suggested that use of logical and problem-oriented coping styles can lead to more happiness in individuals, whereas lack of use of emotion-focused coping styles results in less happiness. Results obtained by Babamiri et al.

(2013) were indicative of a significant correlation between coping styles and happiness. Therefore, while there is a positive correlation between problem-oriented coping styles and happiness, there is a negative association between emotion-focused coping styles and happiness.

Furthermore, the mentioned studies indicated that use of problem-oriented coping styles was associated with happiness and prosperity (Zhang et al. 2013; Rajaei et al. 2016; Ben-Zur 2009). Meanwhile, avoidance and emotion-focused coping styles were correlated with lower mental health, higher levels of psychological distress (Diong et al. 2005), and increased negative emotions (Paula Júnior and Zanini 2011).

Results obtained by Gustems-Carnicer and Calderón (2013) revealed the positive impact of problem-oriented coping style on reduced symptoms of depression, phobia and the overall level of mental health of the subjects. In contrast, avoidance coping style was associated with psychological symptoms, which are indicative of psychological distress with a negative relationship with mental health. In a research by Nunes et al. (2016), it was affirmed that focusing on the positive relationship and emotions had negative correlation with mental health. Therefore, positive attitude toward an issue can help mentally and socially cope with health-related problems in adults.

Other studies have also revealed the positive impact of coping styles, which not only increased prosperity in life, but it was also associated with personality development, satisfaction and improved job performance (Loukzadeh and Mazloom Bafrooi 2013). In contrast, use of escape-avoidance coping strategies was significantly associated with lower level of participation and quality of life (Levasseur and Couture 2015).

To confirm the mentioned results, we can refer to results obtained by Hahn (2006), which was indicative of experiencing less negative emotions in happy individuals, who applied problem-oriented strategies and evaluated incidents in a controlled manner. On the other hand, unhappy individuals were unable to evaluate life events in a controlled manner, immediately using avoidance coping style to reduce negative outcomes. Meanwhile, these strategies cause no reduction in the stress level of patients and often lead to reduced happiness (Hahn 2006). Therefore, it could be stated that the essential element of problem-solved strategies was their association with positive and controlled assessment of events and incidences, which led to reduced tension and increased happiness. Nevertheless, many strategies, such as avoidance and emotion-oriented techniques, caused no stress reduction and were associated with decreased feeling of happiness in individuals due to lack of sense of control.

Feldman and Steptoe (2003) emphasized the importance of control as an effective factor for increased happiness and reduced stress level. Results obtained by Feldman and Steptoe (2003) and Loukzadeh and Mazloom Bafrooi (2013) indicated that use of problem-oriented strategies led to increased meaning of life, happiness and reduced stress.

As mentioned above, the majority of studies in this area have focused on evaluation of the relationship between religious attitudes and happiness or between coping styles and happiness, while neglecting the simultaneous assessment of the relationship between the mentioned variables and happiness to determine the contribution of each of them in anticipation of happiness. Given the lack of studies in this field, the present study aimed to evaluate the level of happiness in adolescents based on their religious attitudes and coping styles to determine the contribution of each of these variables in predicting happiness.

Therefore, hypotheses presented in the research are as follows:

1. There is a positive relationship between religious attitude and prosperity of adolescents.

2. There is a positive association between problem-oriented coping strategies and prosperity of adolescents.
3. There is a negative relationship between emotion-oriented coping strategies and prosperity of adolescents.
4. Religious attitude and coping strategies play a significant role in predicting prosperity of adolescents.

Ethical Consideration

Study tools were approved by the ethics committee of general education office of Semnan, Iran. Information related to the research was provided for the participants, and informed consents were obtained prior to the study.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This correlational research was conducted to predict happiness based on coping styles and religious attitudes of male and female adolescents. In total, 381 individuals of Semnan (Eastern provinces of Iran) were selected in 2015 using multistage cluster sampling method. This process was carried out by random selection of three female and three male schools. Following that, subjects were randomly selected according to the size of the selected schools to complete the questionnaires. Demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. It should be noted that mean and standard deviation of age of the participants were 15.997 and 0.813, respectively.

Data Collection

After coordinating with school authorities and teachers of the classes, the questionnaires were distributed among the students shortly before attendance of class by the teacher. Objectives of the research were explained by the researcher, adding that participation in the study was voluntarily. Students were motivated to complete the questionnaires by mentioning the fact that the results would be delivered through school attendance, e-mail or by mail. For this purpose, the participants were asked to write a code on the questionnaire to determine their preferred method of receiving the results. After completing the

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of participants (gender, age, education field)

Variable	Status	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	209	54.9
	Female	172	45.1
Age	15	126	33.1
	16	130	34.1
	17	125	32.8
Education field	Mathematics	140	36.7
	Science	150	39.4
	Humanities	91	23.9

questionnaires, subjects were required to deliver the questionnaires to the researchers. Finally, from 400 questionnaires, 381 defect-free questionnaires were transferred to SPSS software as the basis for calculations (the response rate was 95.25%).

Measurement Tools

Religious Attitude Questionnaire

Religious attitude of the subjects was evaluated using Golriz and Baraheni Religious Attitude Questionnaire (RAQ). This 25-item questionnaire was scored based on a five-point Likert scale (0–4). The total score of the questionnaire was 0–100, where a higher score was interpreted as stronger religious attitude. Validity of the questionnaire was estimated at the correlation coefficient of 0.80 using the Allport–Vernon–Lindzey test. In addition, its reliability was calculated at the Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 (Mosallanejad et al. 2013). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.81 through Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) was used to assess the level of happiness in the participants. This questionnaire was developed by Argyle and Lu in 1990. After consultations with Beck, Argyle decided to reverse the sentences of Beck depression inventory. The final form of this questionnaire contains 29 multiple-choice items. In this questionnaire, the option representing the maximum rate of happiness receives four points, whereas the option indicating the lack of happiness receives one score. Therefore, the maximum and minimum scores are 116 and 29, respectively (Jenaabadi and Mohammadi Esfahrood 2014). Reliability and validity of the questionnaire have been confirmed in the Iranian society (Alipour and Agah Harris 2007). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated at the Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

Ways of Coping Questionnaire

In this study, coping strategies of the subjects were assessed using Lazarus ways of coping questionnaire (WOCQ), which was developed in 1980 by Folkman and Lazarus. This 66-item questionnaire is scored based on four-point Likert scale (never used = 0, rarely used = 1, often used = 2, always used = 3) (Niknami et al. 2015). Moreover, the questionnaire is comprised of eight subscales, including distancing, confrontation coping, self-controlling, escape-avoidance, seeking social support, planned problem solving, positive reappraisal, and accepting responsibility. While 16 statements of the test are misleading, the other 50 items evaluate the coping approach of respondents. In addition, the questionnaire is divided into two categories of emotion-focused coping strategies and problem-oriented coping styles (Zokaei Kheyrahi et al. 2014). In this study, reliability of the questionnaire was estimated at the Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 and 0.78 for problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping styles, respectively.

Statistical Analysis

Data was performed in IBM SPSS version 21 using Pearson's correlation coefficient (to evaluate the simple relationship between variables) and stepwise multiple regression (to predict happiness based on religious beliefs and coping styles).

Results

In the stepwise multiple regression, which was applied to predict happiness through religious beliefs and coping styles, the presence of outliers was checked first and the box plot chart was corrected. Following that, the scatter diagram and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to determine the linearity of the relationship between the variables. Results were indicative of a significant and linear relationship between criterion and prediction variables.

Results of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test were indicative of normal distribution of the data ($P > 0.05$). In order to assess the independence of errors, Durbin–Watson statistic was applied, demonstrating that the assumption of independence was established ($DW = 1.83$). On the other hand, multicollinearity assumption was evaluated through tolerance statistic and variance inflation factor (VIF). According to the results, the minimum and maximum VIF values were 0.45 and 1.2, respectively, indicating no multicollinearity between the independent variables. According to the established assumptions, research hypotheses were evaluated.

Before the use of regression analysis, the first to third hypotheses of the research were evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficients. Results indicated that the highest correlation was observed between problem-focused coping style and happiness ($r = 0.31$, $P < 0.01$). In other words, increased use of problem-focused coping style would promote happiness. In this study, the relationship between emotion-focused coping style and happiness ($r = -0.184$, $P < 0.01$) indicated that increased use of emotion-focused coping style led to decreased happiness. Moreover, a relationship was found between religious attitudes and happiness ($r = 0.129$, $P < 0.05$), suggesting a significant positive relationship between religious attitudes and happiness. After the evaluation of the first-third hypotheses of the research using Pearson's correlation coefficients, step-by-step regression was applied to assess the fourth hypothesis (Table 2).

According to Table 2, the problem-focused coping style was incorporated into the analysis and explained 0.096 of the happiness variance in the first model. In the second step, by adding the emotion-focused coping style variable, the amount of explained variance increased from 0.096 to 0.15. In the final step and by adding the religious attitude variable to the model, a total of 0.167 of variance of happiness was explained by problem-focused coping style, emotion-focused coping style and religious attitude. In Table 3, standard and non-standard regression coefficients are presented.

In the table above, the non-standard b coefficients and the standardized beta coefficients for regression of happiness prediction through religious beliefs and ways of coping with stress are provided. As observed, beta coefficients were positive for religious attitudes and problem-focused coping styles, while they were negative for emotion-focused coping styles. These results suggested that stronger religious attitudes and more use of problem-focused coping style in individuals could result in higher level of happiness, whereas

Table 2 Summary of regression model and statistics of analysis of variance

Variance	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P _≤	R	R ²
Problem-focused coping style	Regression	6940.05	1	6940.05	40.38	0.0005	0.310	0.096
	Residual	65,137.01	379	171.86				
	Total	72,077.06	380					
Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping styles	Regression	10,787.51	2	5393.76	33.27	0.0005	0.387	0.150
	Residual	61,289.55	378	162.14				
	Total	72,077.06	380					
Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping styles and religious attitudes	Regression	12,035.88	3	4011.96	25.19	0.0005	0.409	0.167
	Residual	60,041.17	377	159.26				
	Total	72,077.06	380					

Table 3 Standard and non-standard coefficients of the final regression model for predicting happiness through religious attitudes and coping strategies to deal with stress

Variables	B	SEB	β	t	P _≤
Religious attitudes	0.234	0.084	0.132	2.80	0.0005
Problem-focused coping style	0.518	0.071	0.347	7.30	0.0005
Emotion-focused coping style	−0.342	0.071	−0.230	−4.83	0.0005

increased use of emotion-focused coping style led to decreased rate of happiness in individuals.

Discussion

The present study was performed to predict the happiness of adolescents using religious attitudes and coping styles. As predicted in the research hypotheses, a significant and positive correlation was observed between happiness of the adolescents in Semnan and variables of religious attitudes and problem-focused coping styles. On the other hand, a negative significant relationship was found between emotion-focused coping styles and happiness. According to the results of the current research, religious attitude and coping strategies played a significant role in prediction of happiness in adolescents.

The results of the first hypothesis, which suggested a positive relationship between religious attitudes and happiness, are consistent with the results obtained by Lewis et al. (2005), Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), Holder et al. (2010), Lesani and Sharifi Yazdi (2014), Levin (2014), and Mashili and Heydari (2015). It was demonstrated that religion and religious attitudes and beliefs could promote happiness in several ways. For instance, religious practices (e.g., mosque attendance) can increase interactions and social support. In addition, creation and development of personal relationship with God improves happiness through stress reduction and improvement of strategies to overcome stress.

Furthermore, religious beliefs give meaning to the life of an individual (Ellison 1991), and moral and real values can be potentially used in stressful situations or as a proactive approach to solve the problems, as well as a positive religious coping style based on a solid and secure relationship with God and a sense of spiritual connection with others. With such a potential ability, people would be able to constructively and directly use their efforts to solve and reconstruct problems through effective recognition or change of the conditions (Krok 2015b). Therefore, it is safe to say that the rate of happiness increases by reduced stressful events.

According to the results of the present study, religion can create coherent belief system, guiding people toward finding a purpose in life and being hopeful about the future. Religious beliefs assist individuals in understanding and dealing with stressful situations, and religious behaviors lead to the use of efficient coping strategies (Głaz 2015). Studies have indicated that people turn to religion for peace and finding meaning in times of suffering and challenges of life (Krok 2014c). In addition, the presence of meaning in life allows individuals to comprehend life in a purposeful and meaningful way, feeling that there is a mission or purpose far beyond material concerns of daily life (Steger 2009). In fact, this personal relationship with a supreme being creates a positive outlook on life, which brings a sense of happiness.

In this regard, Pollner (1989) concluded that having a deep relationship with God was associated with highest levels of mental health prediction. Moreover, Pargament et al. (1990) reported that believing in benevolence of God caused a sense of meaning, self-confidence and control over one's life. Delbridge et al. (1994) conducted a research to answer the question: "does believing in God add meaning to one's life?", demonstrating that believing in God led to increased meaning of life in religious individuals. In addition, indirect faith, such as church attendance, created social support, causing a sense of purpose in life through its collective and integrating function. Furthermore, Fishter (1981) marked that religious truth was the only way to add meaning to pain and suffering.

Results obtained by Hicks and King (2008, 2009) demonstrated a direct relationship between religion and sense of meaning, since religion is the central source for creating a sense of meaning in life for individuals through providing beliefs, expectations and key goals and leading their life toward a wider dimension. According to the results of the aforementioned researches, religious attitudes and behaviors had a positive impact on meaning of life. Behaviors, such as trusting in God and praying, provide hope and inner peace (Park et al. 1990). Heaving a goal and meaning in life, feeling of belonging to a noble source, hoping in God's help in stressful situations (Hicks and King 2008), praying, benefiting from support groups, and appealing to religious scriptures (Park et al. 1990) are methods used by religious individuals to experience the least amount of suffering when dealing with stressful situations.

In order to explain the effect of religious attitudes on increased happiness, we refer to Newman and Pargament (1990) study, which indicated that the religion of people provided an emotional support and helped solving their problems. This type of problem resolving is one of the tricks used to increase compatibility and prosperity. Moreover, having faith in God, imagining a kind, just, and supportive God, attending religious rituals (e.g., praying sessions, citation of Quran, applying a healthy lifestyle with regard to afterlife, and having the support of clergymen and church members) had an association with mental health (Pargament et al. 1990). In addition, Jones (1993) conducted broad evaluations, demonstrating that having faith and religious attitudes were the best predictors of satisfaction in life and prosperity. It is noteworthy that our findings are in congruence with results obtained by Francis et al. (2000) and Argyle (2001). Conducting a meta-analysis on 56

studies related to the relationship between religion and prosperity led to the identification of a positive, but rather weak, association between religion and happiness in life. Results obtained by Aghili and Kumar (2008) indicated that individuals with internal religious orientations were more content with life, compared to others with external religious orientations. Moreover, García-Alandete and Bernabé Valero (2013) and Yeganeh and Shaikhmahmoodi (2013) found a positive relationship between internal religious orientation and mental health. On the other hand, results obtained by Kawa et al. (2015) were indicative of a significant association between internal religious orientation and variables of self-confidence, self-adjustment, mental health, satisfaction, and meaning of life. Several studies presented in the introduction section of the article, such as Hassanvand Amouzadeh (2016), Lesani and Sharifi Yazdi (2014), Maheshwari and Singh (2009), Holder et al. (2010), Aghili and Kumar (2008), Lewis and Cruise (2006), French and Joseph (1999), also demonstrated a positive relationship between being religious or having religious attitudes and prosperity. In this respect, our findings also demonstrated a positive relationship between having religious attitudes and happiness.

The results of the second hypothesis, which suggested a positive relationship between problem-focused coping styles and happiness, are consistent with the results of studies by Lohman and Jarvis (2000), Yang and Mao (2007), Babamiri et al. (2013), and Khodabakhsh et al. (2015). The major characteristic of problem-focused coping style is performing direct acts to reduce stress and increase stress management skills. These strategies are applied to process the information associated with stressful events in a manner that leads to the lowest level of negative experiences. On the other hand, happy and joyful people are those who process the information in a way that leads to their happiness. These people also have control over life, applying positive and proactive approaches to deal with stressful situations. This perception matches with the characteristics of problem-focused coping strategies, the most important of which is the use of direct action to reduce stress. Given the significant importance of potential cognitive assessments of stressful stimuli in the coping process (MacCann et al. 2011), it could be stated that cognitive skills are used to solve a problem by applying problem-focused coping strategies. Therefore, the ways to cope with a problem are directly examined, and psychological satisfaction is usually achieved by finding appropriate solutions to problems.

On the other hand, this situation causes intellectual order and coherence, reducing emotional distress. In the shadow of obtained intellectual coherence and emotional comfort, the source of stress is better identified and can be controlled and evaluated. Identification of the stress source increases self-confidence, reduces anxiety and distress, improves mental status and increases positive emotions. Moreover, high self-esteem induces a sense of belief in oneself, which enables an individual to deal with difficult life situations (Rajaei et al. 2016).

Problem-oriented coping style refers to efforts of an individual to solve problems that cause stress. People with problem-oriented coping style have various skills, including collecting information, decision-making, planning and resolving conflicts, which are applied as means to solve problems when dealing with stressful situations (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). In fact, instead of avoiding stressful situations, people who use problem-oriented coping style directly face the difficulties, make logical and practical decisions and use efficient and appropriate strategies alone or with the help of others. These skills and attributes lead to increased positive emotions in these individuals. In addition, application of problem-oriented coping style results in problem solving or changing the circumstances. By changing the meaning of the stressful situation and focusing on specific goals, people can obtain a sense of control over the situation (Folkman and Moskowitz 2000).

According to studies, there is a positive association between positive emotions and problem-focused coping style (Park et al. 2004). Positive emotions lead to the creation of intellectual patterns, that are significantly unique, efficient, creative, integrated, and flexible (Isen 1999). Moreover, problem-focused coping style improves thinking (Fredrickson 2001) and helps people learn from stressful life events, have an optimistic look at life, seek advantages, and consider negative experiences as the basis for their growth and development. Use of these strategies can also increase the attention, behavioral treasury, and personal resources (social, intellectual, psychological and physical) in individuals. They can also be used to overcome or cope with stressful situations (Khosla 2006). Positive emotions mentally provide an opportunity to stay away from stress, restoring resources that are depleted by stress.

Therefore, given the numerous features of problem-oriented coping strategies, they can lead to happiness associated with increased positive emotions in dealing with stressful events of life. In terms of the third hypothesis (a negative and significant relationship between emotion-focused coping strategies and happiness), it could be stated that application of emotion-focused coping style leads to lack of direct confrontation and not accepting responsibility for solving problems and only focusing on decreasing the unpleasant and negative emotions instead of specific targeting of the problem. Use of emotion-focused coping strategies is due to lack of control over feelings or stressful situations and impulsive behaviors. This strategy reduces the efficiency of individuals to cope with problems, subsequently decreasing happiness and increasing the incidence of negative emotions (e.g., anger, depression, and anxiety). In addition, the emotion-focused coping strategies are associated with social isolation, rumination, disappointment, and high level of negative emotions (Campos et al. 2004).

The coping theory of happiness also demonstrates that happy individuals have consistent thoughts and behaviors. These people are optimistic, worship God and say prayers. They try to solve problems directly and ask for help of others at times. On the other hand, unhappy individuals think and behave in a pessimistic way. They often live in a dream, always blame themselves and others and refuse to solve their own problems (Costa and McCare 1980). Given the objective manifestations of emotion-focused coping style (i.e., anger, loneliness, depression, anxiety, avoidant style, and escape from stressful situations), it is clear that application of such strategies would lead to decreased happiness (Rajaei et al. 2016).

In addition, results of the fourth hypothesis of the research, which demonstrated the significant impact of religious attitudes and coping strategies on prediction of prosperity in adolescents, were confirmed. Simultaneous multiple correlation between these variables together with the variable of happiness was estimated at 0.409, indicating that 16.7% of happiness variance was confirmed by coping strategies and religious attitudes. From this amount, another 15 and 1.7% were related to coping styles and religious attitudes, respectively.

Beta coefficients were also indicative of the high importance of the role of problem—(β 0.347) and emotion-oriented (β -0.230) coping strategies, compared to religious attitudes (β 0.132). In this regard, no research was found on the simultaneous effect of these variables on prosperity. In addition, as mentioned in the introduction section, there is a data gap in this regard, which requires more research to understand whether religious attitudes can play a significant role in prediction of prosperity in the presence of some variables, such as coping strategies (and other related variables).

Limitations

One of the major drawbacks of the research was the age range of the subjects, which limited the generalization of results to only this specific age range. Furthermore, this limited age range might have affected and reduced the range of correlations. Participants of this study were selected from schools; therefore, those who left school for any reason were not included in the present study. It is recommended that similar studies be conducted on all adolescents in various age ranges. It is also suggested that further studies be carried out in other organizations and on different age ranges. Another limitation of the study was data collection methodology (use of questionnaires). Although this method is a conventional approach in many studies, it is also suggested to collect the data by using several different methods. In this case, the results can be further generalized. A principal limitation of the study is that the results are obtained from a correlational study. Therefore, the deduction of decisive causal relations would not be possible. It is suggested that the effectiveness of teaching and interference in coping styles and religious attitudes of adolescents on their happiness be assessed in future studies.

Conclusion

According to the results of the present study, a positive relationship was observed between happiness and variables of religious attitudes and problem-focused coping strategies. On the other hand, the emotion-focused coping styles were negatively associated with happiness. Accordingly, it is recommended that in addition to strengthening the religious attitudes, use of problem-focused coping styles and lack of use of emotion-focused coping styles be emphasized to increase the happiness of the youth.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent Informed consents were obtained from all of the participants.

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