The Relation between Religious Orientations, Irrational Beliefs, and Substance Abuse Tendencies among Teenagers

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Addiction is a physical, mental, and social illness in which pre-addiction backgrounds play a substantial role. The readiness of addiction is considered to be the beliefs of the individual about the outcome and outcome of any work and value that a person makes for this result (Galanter, 2006). Tendencies toward substance use in individuals are assessed according to their beliefs and views about substance. The present study was conducted with the purpose of examining the relationship between the religious orientations and irrational beliefs and the substance abuse tendencies among teenagers. Due to the high prevalence of substance dependence among different classes and the difficulty in treating it, attempts to identify the causes of this problem in many populations are very important, and the awareness of the family and authorities in juvenile adolescents and how to deal with this phenomenon is also very effective as such.

2. Theoretical Framework
Religious beliefs can be employed as an antidote against the disorders caused by substance abuse. According to Allport (1967), individuals with an external religious orientation will be the tool of satisfaction of their basic needs, and those with internal religious orientation, while integrating religious values, will consider religion as a goal. In this case, findings show that people with high religious orientations are less likely to consume alcohol and other substances. Studies in this area have confirmed that when religious beliefs and the sense of meaning and purpose are at a low level in one’s life, they would be more prepared for substance abuse (Miller, 1988). The presence of irrational thoughts and beliefs also play a significant role in the etiology and treatment process for the individuals who are dependent on substances (Gastfriend, 2005). The results of a study conducted by Mahmoudi (2013) showed
that people with higher irrational thoughts are less resilient toward substance and have a more positive view about them. Ghorbani, Kazemi, & Ghorbani (2011) demonstrated that people suffering from methamphetamine abuse disorder had more irrational beliefs as compared with normal individuals. Aminpour and Ahamd Zadeh (2011) compared the irrational beliefs in addicted and normal people and discovered that these beliefs were more significant in the former type than the latter one. In view of the above discussion, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between religious attitudes, irrational beliefs and substance abuse tendencies.

3. Methodology
The population of the study included the students of the 2nd grade of high school in Shahin Dez County studying during 2016-2017 academic year. The sample population included 219 students who were selected through multi-stage cluster sampling. To analyze the data, the Pearson correlation method as well as multi-variable linear regression were used. Furthermore, the questionnaires including addiction preparedness (Zargar, 2006), religious orientation (Allport, 1967), and irrational beliefs of Ahwaz (4IBT-A) (Ebadi & Motamedin, 2005) were given to the sample population.

4. Results
The results showed that substance abuse tendencies have a positive, significant relationship with extrinsic religious orientations and irrational beliefs, while it has a negative, significant relationship with intrinsic religious orientations. The three variables of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations and irrational beliefs are capable of predicting teenagers’ substance abuse tendencies; in fact, it could predict that 41% of the variance was related to substance abuse tendencies.

5. Conclusion
The results of this study show that teenagers with intrinsic religious orientations are less likely to have substance abuse tendencies, whereas individuals with extrinsic religious beliefs are more likely to have drug abuse tendencies. In fact, enforcing religious beliefs across the entire stages of life can be a preventive measure to reduce mental disorders and its consequences, such as Substance addiction, depression, and anxiety (Asghari, Kordmirza, & Ahmadi, 2013). Other studies also assert the fact that the minimum function of religion plays a direct protective role against any type of damage. As a result, it can be stated that individuals’ religious beliefs and outlooks increase their immunity against substances; it appears that individuals with more intrinsic and real religious beliefs are more immune against addiction.
Furthermore, teenagers who had irrational beliefs faced more substance use tendencies. According to Ellis (1995), mental and behavioral problems are the result of individuals’ incorrect understanding as emotions are the products of awareness (Zareidoost, Atefvahid, Bayanzadeh, & Birashk, 2007). In addition, sometimes there are incorrect beliefs among people regarding drugs and addiction, which only complicates and worsens the situation. For instance, false beliefs such as “recreational and very inconsiderable use of substances will not lead to addiction” and “everything is worth experiencing for one time”, unfortunately result in the spread of addiction across the society. Ultimately, religious orientations and irrational beliefs are capable of predicting 41% of changes in the scores related to substance abuse tendencies among teenage students. Consequently, the absence of intrinsic religious outlooks and rational beliefs in individuals would make them more susceptible to dangerous behaviors such as substances abuse, providing the context for their addiction. It is thus recommended that proper strategies and models be used to confront religious disbeliefs, irrational beliefs, and substances use in order to change the students’ views about substances use and enforce their religious beliefs.

**Keywords:** Substance abuse tendencies, Intrinsic religious orientation, Extrinsic religious orientation, Irrational beliefs

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