



RESEARCH PAPER

Religious Passion, Social Alienation, and Cognitive Closure Ignite the Religious Self-Sacrifice

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ABSTRACT

The study intended to examine the relations between passion for religion, social alienation, need for closure, and self-sacrificial behavior for religion between drug addicts, prisoners, and students in Pakistan. It precisely focused on variances within these high-risk and overall populations with the use of standardized psychometric tools. Religious passion, social alienation, and cognitive closure are recognized to affect se prosocial or self-sacrificial behaviors. Considering how these aspects cooperate is necessary in perspectives where religion intensely forms identity and social behavior. This study reports the gap in the literature concerning the joint prognostic power of these psychological ideas in various Pakistani inhabitants. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was utilized. A total of 354 applicants, including males and females, were employed using a purposive sampling technique from prisons, drug rehabilitation centers, and educational organizations across many divisions. Members completed the Passion for Religion Scale, Social Alienation Scale, Need for Closure Scale, and Self-Sacrifice for Religion Scale. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were executed to inspect relations and predictive associations among variables. Passion for religion showed a strong positive correlation with self-sacrifice for religion ($r = .706, p < .001$), while social alienation ($r = .213, p < .001$) and need for closure ($r = .420, p < .001$) also correlated positively. Regression analysis revealed that passion for religion ($\beta = .428, p < .001$), social alienation ($\beta = .289, p < .001$), and need for closure ($\beta = .427, p < .001$) significantly predicted self-sacrifice for religion, collectively explaining 59.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .599, F = 16.36, p < .001$). Precautionary interventions should address the interaction between strong religious passion, alleged social isolation, and a high need for closure to diminish risks of harmful self-sacrificial behaviors.

KEYWORDS

Religious Passion, Social Alienation, Cognitive Closure, Religious Self-Sacrifice

Introduction

Religion is a system of values, beliefs and practices that links individuals to the nature of existence and the universe, which are frequently associated with having faith in one or more divine beings (Elsayed et al, 2023). In many studies conducted, Religion is often associated with the use of prayers, rituals, and worship to connect with the spiritual or to show a person's faith, and may also consist of a set of moral principles and ethical principles that guide decision-making and behavior (Liyanapathirana & Akroyd, 2023). According to a study in the US, around 96% of youngsters disclose a trust in God (Princeton Religious Research Center, 1996) and 72% identify religion as the only essential impact in their lives (Bergin & Jensen, 1990). In a study, it was found that religion can provide answers to the questions of people and thus give them a sense of purpose and meaning about the nature of the purpose of life, existence and the meaning of distress (Davis et al., 2019). Religion is

complicated and multidimensional this there is no single definition that can fully describe the many factors of religion. (Malone & Dadswell, 2018).

The reduction of an individual's harmony in his social, cultural and natural environment that makes a way to enforce loneliness and hopelessness is called alienation. (Kongar, 1979). The word alienation has its roots in Latin, that is, originated from the noun alienation, which again is traced back to the Latin verb alienare, meaning to 'eliminate', and it was popularized in early times in theological writings (Sarfraz, 1997; Banat, 2005). A procedure in which a person puts him/herself for a worthy objective in the interest of the group is called alienation. (Schacht, 1980). According to Rajab (1986), the word "alienation" will receive priority in terms of its frequency only if linguists assess what researchers and philosophers write in our time about it. One significant explanation of interpreting radicalization and support for political violence is rooted in social alienation as a cause (Lobato et al., 2023). A process that causes social powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, and isolation is called social alienation (Albdwawi & Nashwan, 2024). The quantity and frequency of social contact are associated with social isolation (Kim et al., 2021). Feelings of powerlessness, isolation and like one don't have meaning in life can emerge in response to social alienation. The reduction or detachment of patients' relationships with others, which leads to negative emotions such as despondency, helplessness, and loss of support, is called social alienation. (del Pozo et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2023).

Literature Review

The concept of need for closure can be defined in a way that people vary in how they respond to ambiguity, particularly when they find unclear answers, opinions, or judgments to be unpleasant or distressing (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). There are two important ways or processes in which motivation is expressed: urgency, the urge to quickly find closure, and permanence, the tendency to hold on to closure and avoid changing it later. However, many challenges have been faced by this concept, such as research by Neuberg, Judice, and West (1997), which challenged it. People with a strong need for closure want to reach a final decision or final answer as soon as possible. They don't like uncertainty or not knowing. First, they "seize," that is, they form a judgement or opinion quickly, then they "freeze," which means now that they have formed the answer or judgment, they have become close-minded and don't want to consider any other information, even if it is relevant. (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). The theory of motivated social cognition helped in the emergence of the need of closure, which claims that cognitive activities are not released from a motivational basis (Kruglanski, 1989). Motivation toward closure, as described by Kruglanski and Webster (1996), is a continuous variable, with a strong desire for closure on one side and a strong desire to avoid it on the other. Better understanding was enabled by various needs for closure research of how epistemic motivation is applicable for human knowledge formation, manipulating a broad spectrum of cognitive and social phenomena (Kossowska et al., 2018). Sacrifice is a concept with complications and brings plenty of prejudices to the debate; however, a full discussion of all its possible meanings lies beyond the scope of this issue (Koci, 2022). According to Bélanger (2014) person being mentally and emotionally aware to die for a holy cause. Often arises from such environments where religious stories are active to structure suffering as liberating and violence as compulsory, often leading to self-sacrifice (Routledge & Juhl, 2010). Kruglanski and Sheveland (2012) submit that such actions are responses to existential threats, social injustice, or ideological indoctrination and are not based on pathology. It is common in cases of terrorism, where martyrdom is appreciated, praised and rewarded in the hereafter world (Gordon, 2002). Evans (1995) suggests that while religiosity has been considered positive in terms of prosocial outcomes and moral conduct, radical interpretations and ideological manipulation can cause the

opposite effect. For example, suicide bombers are often instructed with theological stories that structure their deaths as purifying their souls and morally necessary (Marsden, 2006).

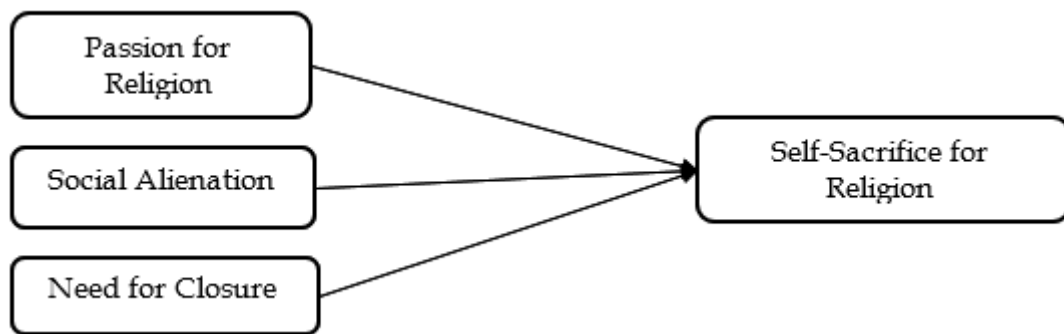


Figure 1 Conceptual Model of the Study

Hypothesis

H1: Passion for religion, social alienation and need for closure will lead to self-sacrifice for religion.

Materials and Methods

The nature of this research was a quantitative correlational design meant to inspect the relationships between passion for religion, social alienation, and need for closure as predictors of self-sacrificial behavior for religion. With the help of a purposive sampling method, data were collected from 354 members, including prisoners, drug addicts, students, and online respondents.

Participants

The population of the study, wherever we collected data from diverse locations and diverse people, i-e, from prisoners, drug addicts and college students. A total of 354 individuals were involved in the contribution, and data were collected from four different places. The data was composed from people, of whom prisoners were 33.1% (n=117), drug addicts were 13.8% (n=49), students were 24.9% (n=88), and online participants were 28.2% (n=100). Out of all the participants, 79.7% (n=282) were males and 20.3% (n=72) were females. Based on education, 23.4% (n=83) were bachelor's students, 70.6% (n=250) had done FSc, 5.1% (n=18) had done Matric, and 0.8% (n=3) were master's students. Of the participants, 34.7% (n=123) were married and 65.3% (n=231) were unmarried. From the participants, 105 people were prisoners, and only 2.5% (n=9) members stated that they have some type of mental illness. The treatment of contributors, their confidentiality, the execution of their free and informed consent, and the preservation of complete confidentiality were all focused on following ethical principles. The purposive sampling method was used in the study, and data were collected.

Measurement Instruments

Passion for Religion

The religious passion was measured through the Passion for religion scale, which is a 16-item passion scale developed by Vallerand et al. (2003). It is used to assess two extents: 8 items evaluate harmonious passion, and 8 items evaluate obsessive passion.

Participants responded on a 6-point Likert passion scale ranging from (1=not agree at all) to (7=very strongly agree). The value of Cronbach's alpha was harmonious passion .84 and for obsessive passion was .79.

Social Alienation

Social alienation was measured with a 6-item scale proven by (Bélanger et al., 2019). Participants responded on a 6-point Likert passion scale ranging from (1=not agree at all) to (7=very strongly agree). The value of Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory.

Need for Closure

The Need for closure was evaluated with the use of the 5-item short form of the Need for Closure Scale developed by Roets & Van Hiel (2011). Participants responded on a 6-point Likert passion scale ranging from (1=not agree at all) to (7=very strongly agree). The higher scores represent a tougher need for secure answers and little lenience for uncertainty. The value of Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory.

Self-sacrifice for Religion

Religious self-sacrifice was assessed by means of a modified version of the Self-Sacrifice Scale by Bélanger et al. (2014), studied to replicate a religious background. The scale contains 10 items and contributors responded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1=not agree at all) to (7=very strongly agree). The adapted version confirmed good internal consistency in this study ($\alpha=.81$).

Procedure

In the initial stage, there was agreeable consent from the specialists of the concerned organization/institution. Purposive sampling technique was used to line students, prisoners and drug addicts in the second step. In the third step, people were provided with an extensive explanation, emphasizing the intended role of their support and clarifying that no academic credit would be granted as an inducement for contributing to the research study. Forms were spread among applicants, which took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Following the supposition of data collection, all questionnaire responses were verified, and the data were entered into data management software, namely SPSS and AMOS, and then subjected to analysis.

Analytic Approach

SPSS and AMOS were used to conduct statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics were considered based on the sample's features. Regression analyses were used to define whether the passion for religion, social alienation and need for closure significantly predicted self-sacrifice for religion. The reliability of scales, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, was satisfactory for this study.

Ethical approval

Informed agreement was taken from the individuals, and the individuals were informed about the determination of the current study. No such committee exists in our institute; therefore, all the ethical procedures were taken into consideration during the entire process.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Regression Analysis between Passion for Religion, Social Alienation, Need for Closure and Self-Sacrifice for Religion.

Variables	B	95%CI		SE B	β	R ²	ΔR^2
		LB	UB				
						.599	.599***
Constant	-5.99	[-12.14	.153]	3.11			
Passion for Religion	.428***	[.367	.490]	.031	.648***		
Social Alienation	.289***	[.131	.446]	.080	.169***		
Need for Closure	.427***	[.266	.588]	.082	.250***		

Note. CI = Confidence Interval *** $p < .001$.

Table 1 shows the impact of Passion for religion, social alienation and need for closure on prisoners, drug addicts and students' self-sacrificial behavior for religion. The R^2 value of (.599) revealed that meaning in life reveals a 59.9% variance in Self-sacrifice for the religion level of drug addicts, prisoners and students with $F=16.36$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed passion for religion ($\beta = .428$, $p < .001$), social alienation ($\beta = .289$, $p < .001$), need for closure ($\beta = .427$, $p < .001$) all positively predicted self-sacrifice for religion.

Table 2
Evaluation Table of Correlation among Variables of the study model (N=354)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Passion for religion	68.23	12.95	-	-	-	-	-
Social Alienation	26.34	4.97	.021	-	-	-	-
Need for closure	22.01	4.98	.223**	.149*	-	-	-
Self-sacrifice for religion	40.26	8.51	.706**	.213**	.420**	-	-

$p < .001$ *. Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 (2-tailed).

Table 2 showed that a correlation analysis was run to examine the impact of passion for religion, social alienation and need for closure on self-sacrificial behavior for religion between the samples of 354 individuals. Passion for religion showed a strong, significant positive correlation with self-sacrifice for religion ($r = .706$, $p < .001$), which means that people who have a high level of passion for religion are more likely to show self-sacrificial behavior for religion. Adding to this, it was moderately correlated with need for closure ($r = .223$, $p < .001$). Social alienation showed weak but significant correlation with need for closure ($r = .149$, $p < .01$), and also showed positive correlation with self-sacrifice for religion ($r = .213$, $p < .001$). Adding to this need for closure showed positive correlation with self-sacrifice for religion ($r = .420$, $p < .001$). Passion for religion and social alienation showed no association between them ($r = .021$).

Discussion

In our present study examined the data collected from 354 individuals from different institutions, i-e, prison, drug rehab center, through online platforms and college. The sample consisted of both males and females. The sample consisted of 354 individuals from different regions of Pakistan.

To test our hypothesis, a model was presented where it was hypothesized that people with a passion for religion, social alienation and need for closure will increase or affect self-sacrificial behavior for religion. The findings of the study support our hypothesis. Our study showed that people who have a high passion for religion, are

socially alienated and have a high need for closure, directly increase self-sacrifice behavior for religion. Passion for religion has been shown to be the strongest predictor of self-sacrificial behavior, which shows that when people are strongly passionate about religion, they are more prone to sacrifice themselves for their faith. In one study, it was shown that people who develop deep emotional and spiritual associations with religion are more likely to view self-sacrifice as a type of crucial dedication (Bélanger, 2014; Routledge & Juhl, 2010).

Passion for religion, when predisposed by revered chronicles and religious mounting of martyrdom, can shape an individual's cognitive schema to value sacrifice for deific or political reasons (Marsden, 2006). People who feel socially isolated or like being rejected by society also show the effect on self-sacrifice because when people feel lonely or powerless, they may seek meaning and connection in religious ideology. People who face aloneness, detachment or disconnection from society may be prone to finding meaning and fitting through spiritual groups or dogmas (Lobato et al., 2023). Fundamental or radical philosophies frequently deliver a solid cluster identity and moral reasoning for self-sacrificial actions, especially when people feel demoted or reckless by wider culture (Zheng et al., 2023).

This finding suggests that alienation is just an inert emotional state, but can act as a strong psychological influencer towards ideologically driven behavior. People who seek need for closure and hate uncertainty are also more likely to support self-sacrificial behavior for religion. In a study, it was suggested that people with an extreme need for closure show an inclination for faith and straightforward beliefs, frequently struggling with opposing evidence (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996).

The correlation background additionally exposed that passion for religion had a strong positive association with self-sacrifice for religion, representing an influential emotional and divine influence on behavioral consequences. Likewise, the need for closure was reasonably associated with self-sacrifice, although social alienation had a less significant association. These results advice a conceivable increasing consequence, where the occurrence of psychological susceptibility, cognitive inflexibility and spiritual passion generates a powerful threat outline for life-threatening behaviors. Remarkably, passion for religion and social alienation showed no significance of correlation, demonstrating that religious passion can happen autonomously of one's intellect of social fitting. This proposes that extremely religious people may not necessarily be socially alienated, but when alienation co-occurs with extreme religiosity and a strong need for closure, it may increase the probability of extreme behavior.

Conclusion

In this study we found that passion for religion, social alienation, and need for closure all meaningfully and positively forecast self-sacrificial behavior for religion, clarifying 59.9% of the variance. Passion for religion appeared as the toughest prognosticator, shadowed by need for closure and social alienation. These conclusions recommend that strong religious pledge, feelings of loneliness, and a craving for closure can interrelate to effect people towards extreme self-sacrificial behaviors for religious reasons.

Recommendations

Recommendation from this study is to use preventive interventions where advance community-based agendas that report social alienation and encourage healthy

social combination, mostly in vulnerable populations such as prisoners and drug addicts. Should poise spiritual education and boost clarifications of religion that highlight prosocial values and peaceful existence, decreasing exposure to radical ideologies. Implement workshops to help people deal with vagueness and uncertainty, decreasing the inflexible thinking forms linked with intense need for closure. Deliver psychological support in prisons, rehab centers, and educational institutions to recognize and direct people displaying high religious passion united with loneliness or mental inflexibility. Discover controlling factors such as socio-economic status, cultural background, or political environment to better comprehend the paths from religious passion to self-sacrifice.

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