A Study on the Relationship Between Loneliness and Personal Relationship with God

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# **Introduction**

With the increase in psychological issues such as loneliness over the past decades, there has been a possible linkage between a strong relationship with God and reduced loneliness. Research on close relationships has theoretically proved that relationships significantly handle stress and adversities while reducing loneliness (Kirkpatrick et al., 1999). Likewise, large bodies of research have been conducted on the issue of loneliness, coping, stress, social support, and the relationship between these issues. Nevertheless, little is known concerning the function of religious associations and beliefs on relationships or particular elements such as loneliness (King et al., 2022). This is in consideration of the existence of several Christina beliefs, which include the sole focus of a relationship with God. Some forms of religious beliefs and connections seem to relate inversely, while others seem to correlate directly. Therefore, the main problem in this study is the insufficient knowledge and literature concerning the correlation between peoples’ relationship with God and their experiences of loneliness.

Scott et al. (2014) showed that Christians that emphasize the personal connection with God exhibited reduced loneliness characteristics than those that stressed the ethical and moral teachings of Jesus. In researching loneliness in adults, Roos & Klopper (2010) analyze three themes that relate to this research, including coping with loneliness, factors contributing to loneliness, and expressions of loneliness. The elements are contradicted by Schwab & Petersen (1990), who had previously found a low correlation between righteousness and loneliness while giving other reasons for loneliness. Wongpakaran et al. (2020) establish the use of a loneliness scale which would be effective in analyzing loneliness in this study. The UCLA loneliness scale would be used to assess loneliness among religious individuals in the tested population class. It is imaginable that individuals who feel a significant connection with God feel less lonely, especially patients, because they are reading and communicating with God through scripture and prayer, respectively (Scott et al., 2014). Hodge (2003) establishes the significant aspect of intrinsic spirituality as one variable for consideration in this research.

It is elaborated by Kirkpatrick et al. (1999) concerning the relationship between loneliness and personal convolutions in religion with mislinkage to the simple belief in God. Roos & Klopper (2010) indicated that individuals who believe in God, while others describe their secure attachments with God, show reduced depression and loneliness. This is in comparison with those believing to have insecure attachments with God and show elevated characteristics of depression and loneliness. In a preliminary study by King et al. (2022), it was discovered that religion and spirituality positively correlate to the health-related quality of life (HRQOL) in survivors within hospitals with significant reports of reduced loneliness. Loneliness is associated with the perceptions of living alone, isolation, and abandonment connected with HRQOL. These relevant studies lead to the main research question of this study: “Is there any correlation between people’s intrinsic spirituality relationship with God and loneliness characteristics?”

The problem with this study is the existence of little evidence concerning the correlation between peoples’ relationship with God and their experiences of loneliness. Curtis et al. (2016) defines the rationale of the problem, stating that loneliness plays a critical role in the experiences of being burdened among cancer patients’ health providers. With the increase in psychological issues such as loneliness over the past decades, there has been a possible linkage between a strong relationship with God and reduced loneliness. Research on close relationships has theoretically proved that relationships significantly handle stress and adversities while reducing loneliness. The burden is mainly contributed by the consumption and anticipatory grief associated with caregiving in cancer patients, which may be coupled with the loss of close relatives. The case of spirituality has been identified as an essential element in the state of enhancing the quality of life. Despite the lack of existing information to support the relationships, this research hypothesizes that persons with a strong relationship with God experience less loneliness. This study includes the study of intrinsic spirituality and loneliness.

# **Method**

## **Participants**

The study included 20 individuals, including church friends aged 18 years and above. The choice of church friends was based on the educational nature of this study and the IRB-exempt status constraints.

**Materials**

The material used in this study included 13 survey questions. The surveys were distributed through physical hand-outs, WhatsApp, and email. The individual was asked to identify themselves in the first question to enhance the classification of answers from male or female genders. A spirituality set of survey statements adopted from Hodge (2003) was used with the inclusion of six questions. The participants were required to complete the statements concerning their spirituality t by selecting numbers corresponding to their best feelings. Likewise, six questions were also adopted from Wongpakaran et al. (2020). The participants were required to select the numbers that best reflected their answers to every question.

**Procedure** ­

The study took place in a small group of church friends of 20 participants whose experiences and responses were collected through the survey statements and questions. The participants’ experiences in intrinsic spirituality were measured through six questions for sentence completion. After that, the participants were subjected to a second loneliness variable to evaluate the degree of loneliness. The answers by the participants were kept entirely anonymous and used for educational purposes.

## **Analysis**

The study analyzed three variables within the conducted correlation research design. The correlation study established relationships between two interconnected variables and made predictions from sample data (Curtis et al. 2016). The demographic variables are defined by the categorical classification of gender using a nominal scale of measurements. The appropriate measure of variability includes the mode of deciding the gender. The first variable of interest was intrinsic spirituality, where sentence completion was on a 0 to 10 ordinal scale for the absence and maximum amount of attributes, respectively. The second variable of interest was loneliness, which included six questions. The quantification of loneliness was through the degree of loneliness, which was evaluated by averaging the scores. The higher ordinal scores in loneliness indicated significant instances of loneliness. Two variables of this study were analyzed based on the responses given by the students.

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**Appendix 1**

**Disclosure:** I am asking you to complete this survey as part of the requirements for my statistics project in a graduate level psychology course. Your answers will remain completely anonymous. No personal information about you will be linked to this survey. Please do not put your name or any other identifying information on the survey. The results of this survey will be used only for educational purposes and will not be published or released to the public. You must be 18 years old or older in order to complete this survey.

1. I identify as

(Select option or fill what applies to you) Male Female Other

**Directions:** Please select the number that best completes the statement about your spirituality (adapted from Hodge, 2003).

1. In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers

**no absolutely all**

**questions my questions**

**0** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10**

1. Growing spiritually is

**more important than of no**

**anything else importance**

**in my life to me**

**10** 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 **0**

1. When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality

**plays is always the**

**absolutely overriding**

**no role consideration**

**0** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10**

1. Spirituality is

**the master motive of**

**life, directing every not part**

**aspect of my life of my life**

**10** 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 **0**

1. When I think of the things that help e grow and mature as a person, my spirituality

**has no effect is absolutely the**

**on my personal most important factor**

**growth in my personal growth**

**0** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10**

1. My spiritual beliefs affects

**absolutely every no aspect**

**aspect of my life of my life**

**10** 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 **0**

**Directions:** Please select the number that best reflects your answer for each question (adapted from Wongpakaran et al., 2020).

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

1. How often do you feel alone?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

1. How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

1. How often do you feel left out?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

1. How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

1. How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometime Often

End.