

Religious Orientation, Academic Stress and Religious Coping among First Year Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the prevalence of religious orientation, academic stress, and the use of religion as a means to cope with academic stress among first-year undergraduates. The sample consisted of 321 first-year students from five faculties of a religiously oriented public university in Malaysia. The data were collected using three separated instruments: a Religious Coping Questionnaire, an Academic Stress Scale, and an Orientation Scale. Frequency analysis was used to examine the prevalence of stress, and religious orientation, while Pearson moment correlation was used to analyze the relationship among the three main constructs: religious coping, religious orientation, and academic stress. The analysis ran an independent sample t-test to check for gender-differences in academic stress, religious coping, and academic stress. The results showed high incidences of religious orientation and religious coping among the sample of undergraduates, but no significant gender differences. The study substantiated that one of the means by which the first-year students reduced their academic stress is through religious coping and religious orientation.

Keywords: *Academic stress, religious coping, religious orientation, first-year undergraduate students, gender-differences*

INTRODUCTION

Today's generation of students faces multiple problems in their daily lives and are influenced by the ever-changing environments and challenging situations. Among the challenges is the issue of academic stress. Academic stress among students has been investigated extensively by a massive number of studies. These studies concluded that there are countless reasons behind students' stress ((Amponsah, Adasi, Mohammed, Ampadu, & Okrah, 2020). Assignments, examinations, failures, peer competition, lack of pocket money (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003; Reddy, Menon, Thattil, 2018; Portoghese, & et al., 2019), parental pressure, poor relationships with colleagues or lecturers, and poor time management, were found to be the most common sources of stressors among college students. While these are personal-level stressors, there are also institutional-level stressors such as overcrowded lecture halls, complicated registration procedures, and insufficient resources to accomplish academic work (Bataneh, 2013; Awino & Agolla, 2008).

Numerous studies have found that religion plays a vital role in coping with stress, depression and anxiety (Pargament, 1997; Ghaus, 2016; Yun, Kim, & Awasu, 2019; Philip, Neuer-Colburn, Underwood, & Bayne, 2019). In dealing with stressors, students may exploit a religious orientation as a defence mechanism to lower their levels of academic stress. Bataineh (2013) and Amponsah and et al. (2019) reported that religious coping is a better predictor of adjustment to challenging academic settings such as taking an examination, final project submission, and project defence, in comparison with general religious orientation. However, strategies employed in religious coping have produced disparate results in different stressful circumstances. Hence, research has found religious coping to be either harmful or helpful depending on the specific strategy developed (Krok, 2015; Parenteau, 2017).

To date, most studies on religious coping involving adolescents have been conducted in the West (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003; Hollinger, & Timothy 2002). What we have in the extant literature hardly explains the prevalence of the phenomenon among Muslim student populations. Hence, this study was taken up to address this gap; focussing on a sample of Muslim students from a diversity cultures and backgrounds as those present within the student population of the Malaysian public university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Miryala (2015), stress is “the body’s reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental, or emotional adjustment or response” (p. 23). Feelings of stress in humans are a result of interaction between individuals and their environment that is perceived as a strain or more than their adaptive abilities can cope and threatening their well-being (). So, when there is a change in life conditions, people experience stress and they need to adapt to the new circumstance.

The academic environment is a challenging environment for students, as they are facing several types of stressors every day (Baqtayan, 2011). Students’ stressors can be divided into five main types: personal, environmental, social and cultural, psychological, and academic. Environmental stress is related to university circumstances especially with first-year college students, such as homesickness, culture shock, etc. (Sajid, Ahmad, & Khalid, 2015).

Academic Sources of Stress

Academic stress is considered the most substantial source of stress among students (Rao, 2008). Academic stressors include such factors as homework, preparation for tests, lack of interest in a specific subject, unsatisfactory academic performance, lower grades, and difficulty in understanding subject’s contents (Sajid et al., 2015). As students link their academic achievement with their future, any changes in their academic performance can lead to a high level of stress (Siraj, Salam, Roslan, Hasan, Jin, & Othman, 2014).

Stress and Religious Coping

Coping strategy denotes a mechanism of coping adopted in a particular context. Over a period of time, the individual evolves a precise coping strategy. This refers to the manner in which an individual reacts to any stressful experience. According to Pargament (1985), religion plays three important roles with regard to coping with stress and strain: Firstly, as a part of coping components, secondly as a provider toward coping, and lastly as a product of coping. Several studies have been conducted on how religious orientation is instrumental to how students manage their stress (Radzi, Ramly, Ghazali, Sipon, & Othman, 2014).

The main factor that influences the religious coping strategies is religious involvement. Adapting to difficult situations seemed to be highly predictable by religious coping compared to general religious orientation. Religion has regularly been cited as a coping strategy of dealing with both depressive moods and risk behaviours in adolescents. Several studies have been conducted to establish the fact that religion is one of the ways students could reduce stress. Meanwhile, studies about the relationship between religious and spiritual coping strategies and academic stressors that involved Muslim students revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between religiosity and academic stress. Students with strong religious personality showed mild to low stress levels (Bataneh, 2013; Radzi, & et al., 2014). Students with high religious commitment have high levels of life satisfaction than students with low religious commitments (Waithaka & Gough, 2017). Even studies conducted with non-Muslim student populations found that spirituality has a great effect on students' handling of stressors (Yun, & et al., 2019). Similarly, Roming and Howard (2019) confirmed that spiritual growth was an essential adaptive factor among students, which contributed to a higher quality of life.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were to survey the prevalence of religious orientation, religious coping and academic stress among first year students at a religiously oriented Malaysian public university and the prospective association among the three constructs. Primarily the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the levels of religious orientation, academic stress, and the use of religion as a means to cope with academic stress?
2. Are there any association among religious orientation, academic stress, and religious orientation?
3. Is there any gender difference in the use of religious coping among first year students?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study is a quantitative exploratory research that uses a cross-sectional survey to collect the required data.

Population and Sample

The population comprises first year students from a Malaysian public university that has an Islamic religious orientation to its work culture, practice and procedures. The reason for choosing students from this university is that this university has a high influx of international students, and hence provides the study with a culturally diverse Muslim population for more robust results concerning responses to academic stress.

A quota sampling technique was used to select 321 first year undergraduate student respondents from the Faculties of Education, Engineering, Law, Human Sciences and Economics.

Instruments

Multi-item scales were adopted to measure the three constructs of the study. All items were drawn from existing scales with satisfactory reliabilities. Some of the questionnaire items were slightly modified to reflect the profile of first year students. The survey contains three separated scales and several demographic questions profiling the respondents on factors such as age, gender, nationality and faculty.

Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)

In this scale, Developed by Allport and Ross (1967) and later refined by Gorsuch and MacPherson (1989), religiosity is measured by intrinsic and extrinsic factors (see the Appendix). The reliability of the ROS using the Cronbach alpha varies from .78 to .87.

Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA)

The Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA) is a 16-item scale developed by Sun, Dunne, Hou and Xu (2010). Seven items were adapted from the Academic Expectations Stress Inventory (AESI) (Ang & Huan, 2006) with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) (see the appendix). The Cronbach alpha of the 16-item ESSA scale was .81, representing good internal consistency.

Brief Religious Coping Scale (BRIEF RECOPE)

The Brief RECOPE, was developed out of Pargament's (1997) program of theory and research on religious coping. The BRIEF RECOPE is a 14-item scale of religious coping with major life stressors. It is divided into two overarching forms of religious coping, i.e., positive and negative

RECOPE (see the Appendix). Studies showed that the reliability of the RECOPE which is deemed important for internal consistency of the students' responses, exceeded the cut-off score, with alpha at .94.

Data Collection Procedure

A quota sampling method was employed in order to get across to all the selected Kulliyahs. The researcher distributed the questionnaire along with some volunteers across all the five Kulliyahs (faculties), Law, Engineering, Human Science, Economics and Education. Data collection was conducted over a period of two weeks. Each student was asked to answer a set of questionnaires. All subjects were informed that their participation will be kept strictly confidential.

RESULTS

Students' Religious Orientation

Table 1 presents the first-year students' responses to statements related to religious orientation. The frequency (percentage) distributions of the responses showed that most students agreed that religion is particularly essential to them because it makes them relax when stressed (95%), religion aids to maintain their life balanced and steady in the same way exactly as their friendship, citizenship, as well as other memberships do (92.8%), the aim of prayer is to procure a happy and peaceful life (92.2%).

Comparably, at least eight out of ten students agreed they would say their prayer when in stress, feeling that the objective of prayer is to secure relief and security. Similarly, distribution of agreements was observed for statements suggesting the importance of prayer [i.e., "prayers carry as much meaning and personal emotions when said alone as when offered in congregation," (83%); "religion gives feelings of comfort during stress" (83%); and "trying hard to integrate religion into all other life endeavours" (80.4%). The influence of religion appears to be pervasive in this sample of undergraduates, where about 80% "find it important to spend time in private religious thought and meditation" and have "religious principles as the main driving force of their whole approach to life." Additionally, more than two thirds of the sample are often deeply aware of God's presence and recite the Holy Quran as a means of reducing stress.

Table 1*Frequency (percentage) Distribution of Students' Religious Orientation*

Item	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
Religion is especially important to me because it makes me relax when I am in stressful situation	3 (.9)	13 (4)	305 (95)
Religion helps to keep my life balanced and steady in exactly the same way as my citizenship, friendship and other memberships do	5 (1.6)	18 (5.6)	297 (92.8)
The purpose of prayer is to secure a happy and peaceful life.	8 (2.5)	17 (5.3)	296 (92.2)
Whenever I am in stress, I use to say my prayers	5 (1.6)	37 (11.6)	278 (86.9)
The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection	10 (3.1)	41 (12.8)	267 (84)
The prayers I say when I am alone carry as much meaning and personal emotions as those said by me during congregates	11 (3.4)	44 (13.8)	264 (82.8)
What religion offers me most is comfort when I am in stress	11 (3.5)	44 (13.9)	262 (82.6)
I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life	19 (5.9)	44 (13.7)	258 (80.4)
It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation	9 (2.8)	55 (17.2)	256 (80)
My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life	11 (3.5)	50 (16.1)	250 (80.4)
I use to read the holy Quran when I want to reduce my stress	13 (4.1)	57 (17.9)	249 (78.1)
Quite often I am keenly aware of the presence of God	22 (6.9)	50 (15.8)	245 (77.3)
Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to cope with my everyday stress	41 (13.2)	64 (20.6)	206 (66.2)
Listening to religious music makes me relax when I am in tension	38 (11.9)	86 (26.9)	196 (61.3)
Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many other ways to solve my problem	133 (41.4)	82 (25.8)	103 (32.4)
It does not matter what I believe as long as I do not have a problem	193 (60.1)	66 (20.6)	62 (19.3)
Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my stressful events	144 (45.6)	112 (35.4)	60 (19)

The respondents reported they occasionally compromised their religious beliefs in order to cope with everyday stress (66.2%) and listened to religious music to make them feel more relaxed during difficult situations (61.3%). 61% agreed that listening to religious music makes them relax when tensed. A substantial proportion disagreed that religion does not matter as long as their lives are free from problems and issues (60.1%).

It can be deduced from the results of data analysis that most of the responses (80%) were positively skewed to “agree”, especially from those items which represent positive religious orientations, thereby indicating that most of the respondents have a positive religious orientation. However, the last five items, which represented negative religious orientations, showed the responses were negatively skewed towards “disagree,” which indicated that most students disagreed with the negative religious orientation. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the first year students in selected religiously oriented public university in Malaysia have positive religious orientations.

Students' Academic Stress

Table 2 shows the students' level of academic stress caused by parental pressures, as most students are highly stressed when they disappoint their parents (68.8%). The second highest stressor is academic performance, “the students' academic grades could impact their future and even can determine their whole life” (59.1%). The third stressor for the respondent sample was “too many tests/exams in the school led to high levels of stress among students (56.6%)”. “Teacher disappointed when students' test/exam results are not ideal” (55.9%) was ranked as the fourth stress source for the students. Future education and career appears to be among the highest academic pressure (50.5%). Moreover, 49.2% of the participants were “not satisfied with their academic grades”, and a similar percentage showed moderate stress (43.6%).

Table 2

Frequency (percentage) Distribution of Students' Academic Stress

Item	No Stress	Moderate Stress	High Stress
I feel that I have disappointed my parents when my test/exam results are poor	7 (2.2)	93 (29)	221 (68.8)
When I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel I am not good enough	9 (2.8)	122 (38.1)	189 (59.1)
I feel stressed when I do not live up to my own standards	12 (3.7)	126 (39.6)	180 (56.6)
Academic grade is very important to my future and even can determine my whole life	9 (2.8)	132 (41.3)	179 (55.9)
I feel that there are too many tests /exams in the school	11 (3.4)	148 (46.1)	162 (50.5)
I feel that I have disappointed my teacher when my test/exam results are not ideal	23 (7.2)	140 (43.6)	158 (49.2)
Future education and employment bring me a lot of academic pressure	11 (3.4)	152 (47.6)	156 (48.9)
I am very dissatisfied with my academic grades	15 (4.7)	156 (48.8)	149 (46.6)
I always lack confidence with my academic scores	18 (5.6)	153 (47.8)	149 (46.6)
I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying	10 (3.1)	168 (52.3)	143 (35.5)
There is too much competition among classmates which brings me a lot of academic pressure	19 (5.9)	161 (50.2)	141 (43.9)

Table 2

Continued

Item	No Stress	Moderate Stress	High Stress
I feel that there is too much school work	16 (5)	177 (55.1)	128 (39.9)
I feel there is too much homework	18 (5.6)	179 (55.9)	123 (38.4)
I usually cannot sleep and worry when I cannot meet the goals I set for myself	40 (12.5)	161 (50.2)	120 (37.4)
My parents care about my academic grades too much which brings me a lot of pressure	45 (14)	176 (54.8)	100 (31.2)

Other sources of academic stressors such as “lack confidence with academic scores”; “feeling of a lot of pressure during the daily studying”; “high competition among classmates”, were stress pressures among the first year students, with about average percentage of 47%. However, half of the respondents have moderate levels of stress with regard to concentration in the class, homework, parents’ pressure and ability to accomplish their goals.

An inspection of the outcomes reveals that a maximum number of the responses fall between the high stress and moderate stress, while the very low responses fall within the no stress option. What can be inferred from this is that academic stress is common among first year undergraduate students, as indicated by the generally low scores for ‘no stress’. The item with the highest response is parent expectation indicating that students are stressed by continuous feelings of concern about their parents’ expectations.

Use of Religion as a Means to Cope with Academic Stress

Table 3 presents the frequency (percentage) distributions of how the students responded to academic stress through religious coping strategies. The majority of first year students (98.2%) ask forgiveness for their sins (moderate and great deal), seek the love of God and care (99%), search for a higher connection with God (97%), seek help from God to curb their anger (97.2%), strived to see how God might assist them in their predicament (91%), decided that their destiny was fated (88.7%), engrossed on religion and stop distressing about their difficulties (89.1%), and felt chastised by God due to lack of their religious commitment(71.7%), in response to the state of their academic stress. These are the religiously positive responses to stress, which would ultimately reduce their stress.

Table 3*Frequency (percentage) Distribution of Students' Religious Coping*

Item	Not at all	A little	Moderate	A great deal
Asked forgiveness for my sins	1 (.3)	5 (1.6)	48 (15)	267 (83.2)
Sought God's love and care	0 (0)	1 (.3)	74 (23.1)	246 (76.6)
Looked for a stronger connection with God	0 (0)	3 (.9)	81 (25.2)	237 (73.8)
Sought help from God in letting go of my anger	1 (.3)	8 (2.5)	113 (35.2)	199 (62)
Tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation	7 (2.2)	16 (5)	98 (30.9)	196 (61.8)
Tried to put my plans into action together with God	1 (.3)	7 (2.2)	114 (36.1)	194 (60.4)
Decided my destiny made this happen	13 (4.1)	22 (6.9)	92 (28.7)	193 (60.3)
Focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems	2 (.6)	33 (10.3)	156 (48.8)	129 (40.3)
Felt punished by God for my lack of devotion	29 (9)	61 (19)	126 (39.3)	104 (32.4)
Wondered what I did for God to punish me	55 (17.2)	69 (21.6)	115 (36.1)	80 (25.1)
Wondered whether God has abandoned me	109 (34.4)	80 (25.2)	72 (22.7)	56 (17.7)
Questioned God's mercy for me	126 (39.3)	72 (22.4)	72 (22.4)	51 (15.9)
Questioned God's love for me	123 (38.3)	83 (25.9)	75 (23.4)	39 (12.2)
Questioned the power of God	207 (65.1)	36 (11.3)	37 (11.6)	38 (11.9)

On the other hand, some (55%) of respondents wondered what they did to deserve punishment (57%), wondered whether God has abandoned them (slightly) (59.2%), questioned the mercy of God (61.7%), questioned God's love for them (72.9%) and questioned the power of God (76.4%) in response to the stress the students experienced. One could see that these last five items are direct opposites of the above items. The results indicated that most of the respondents exhibited positive use of religious coping towards their academic stress, even though the responses were negative.

Relationship among Religious Coping, Religious Orientation and Academic Stress

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was estimating the relationship of religious coping, academic stress and religious orientation among first year students. The results show a positive significance but very weak correlation between the religious coping and academic stress $r = 0.191$, $p = 0.01$. Relatively, there was a slightly stronger and significant correlation between religious coping and religious orientation $r = 0.39$, $p = 0.01$. Meanwhile, the correlation between religious orientation and academic stress was also significant, albeit weak ($= 0.22$, $p = 0.01$). These results indicate that there is little relationship between academic stress as well as both religious

coping and religious orientation. What can be deduced here is that academic stress is normal for serious minded students, but being religious would keep stress manageable.

Gender Differences in Religious Coping and Academic Stress

Table 4 sheds light on gender differences on religious coping and academic stress among first year students in selected public university. The table presents the result for the difference in gender in relation to religious coping, academic stress and religious orientation. It shows no significant difference in the score for males on religious coping ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .43$), academic stress ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .74$) and religious orientation ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .48$) as well as females in terms of religious coping ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .39$), academic stress ($M = 3.43$, $SD = .69$) and religious orientation ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .38$). While $t(297) = -.13$, $p = .89$; $t(309) = -.78$, $p = .44$; and $t(289) = -1.77$, $p = .09$ for religious coping, academic stress, and religious orientation, respectively.

Table 4
Gender-Differences in Religious Coping, Academic Stress and Religious Orientation of First Years Students

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean	STD Deviation	t-value	Sig (2 tailed)
Religious coping	Male	93	2.03	.43		
	Female	206	2.04	.39	-.13	.89
Academic Stress	Male	99	3.35	.73		
	Female	212	3.42	.68	-.78	.43
Religious Orientation	Male	94	3.83	.48		
	Female	197	3.92	.38	-1.77	.07

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result from the descriptive analysis shows that first year students mostly used religious means of coping for their stress relief. They agreed and strongly believed that religious rituals such as praying and reciting the glorious Quran greatly relieved them from academic stress. For this reason, they continuously referred to it when stressed. In support of this, studies have found that one potential mediator of the stress/depression relationship is religiosity, which has been associated with a protective (and rarely a risk factor) factor in the mental health discipline (Romig & Howard, 2019; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Hackney & Sanders, 2003; Harrison, Koenig, Hays, Eme-Akwari, & Pargament, 2001). The rationale behind the positive influence of religious coping as well as religiosity on academia lies in the fact that Islam offers acts of worship that soothe the mind. For instance, before you can pray you clean your body with cool water, free your mind from all troubles and worries by purging the stressful tendencies in oneself through ablution.

The data also revealed a positively significant (albeit weak) association between religious coping and students' academic stress, which implies a strong correlation between religious orientation and academic stress reduction. Bataineh (2013) conducted a similar study and discovered that there were positive relationships between religious sources and academic stress. This does not mean that religious coping and religious orientation are negative and cannot relieve individuals from stress.

The truth of the matter is that stress is something common for every normal and active human. This means that the presence of religiosity does not prevent human beings from becoming stressed. That is, religious coping can only moderately help academic stress but cannot remove it totally. Carpenter et al. (2012) found that positive religious coping only slightly reduced or weakened the effects of stress on depressive symptoms. Human beings learn how to cope and moderate stressful conditions through religious practices. Equally, stressors are live experiences that produce stress and can be either positive or negative. That is, life without stress does not exist, but the ability to manage, moderate and maintain it is what matters most, which is the function of religious coping and religious orientation.

The third finding from the present research is that there is no significant gender difference with regard to both academic stress and religious coping. Gender is not one of the determining factors that could positively or negatively influence religious coping or academic stress (Radzi, & et al., 2014; Gardner, Krägeloh, & Henning, 2014). This result is contrary to the findings of Sharma and Kaur (2011), who found that girls scored significantly higher overall on academic stress as compared to boys. This clearly indicates that there is gender difference with regard to academic stress. Equally, Backović, Živojinović, Maksimović, and Maksimović (2012), postulated that female students assessed their physical health status and overall stress status worse compared to males.

However, other studies found no significant gender difference with regard to academic stress, in support of this present research. For example, Farhan and Khan (2015) discovered that gender has no significant impact on students' GPA, level of stress and self-esteem. Bhosale (2014) asserted that there is no significant difference between boys and girls on academic stress and academic conflict. The author concluded that gender difference is not a key point in academic stress and academic conflict.

The major factor which could be responsible for the disparities in the findings of these scientific researches with the same variables could be the difference in cultural backgrounds. Socio-cultural backgrounds greatly influence human dispositions. It could be rationalised that those societies where gender is not considered a significant criterion for discrimination, will more likely treat different genders more equitably, whereas societies where gender is conflated with identity would possibly discriminate individuals based on their gender. Based on this, one could not conclusively conclude that both sides are scientifically untenable. However, the result from the present research suggests that gender is not a factor, meaning that there is no significant gender difference with regard to their academic stress and religious coping.

From the results derived from the present research, the researcher hereby recommends that students should take their religious orientation, understanding and orientation very

seriously because it goes a long way in assisting them in coping with their academic stress and preventing severe stress which could lead to depression. Students are equally encouraged to become involved in religious activities in and outside the campus, for their religious understanding will improve, thereby having good religious orientation.

It is highly recommended for the university to regularly organise stress management orientation, which should include religious coping for first year students since it is a major problem that leads to other problems for students. It is impactful for higher institutions to organize relaxing, soothing, and spiritual programs for the students.

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APPENDIX I

Religious Orientation Questionnaire (Allport & Ross, 1963)

The following questions relate to different religious orientations that people believe. Read each statement carefully and indicate your agreement or disagreement with it. Indicate to the left of the statement the number that best describes how you think.

1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.					
2.	Quite often I am keenly aware of the presence of God.					
3.	Religion helps to keep my life balanced and steady in exactly the same way as my citizenship, friendship and other memberships do					
4.	My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.					
5.	The prayers I say when I am alone carry as much meaning and personal emotions as those said by me during congregates.					
6.	Religion is especially important to me because it makes me relax when I am in stressful situation					
7.	It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation.					
8.	The purpose of prayer is to secure a happy and peaceful life.					
9.	It does not matter what I believe as long as I do not have a problem					
10.	Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my stressful events					
11.	Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many other ways to solve my problem					
12.	The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.					
13.	Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to cope with my everyday stress.					
14.	What religion offers me most is comfort when I am in stress.					
15.	Whenever I am in stress, I use to say my prayers.					
16.	I use to read the holy Quran when I want to reduce my stress.					
17.	Listening to religious music makes me relax when I am in tension.					

APPENDIX II

BRIEF RCOPE (Pargament, 1997)

The following questions measure religious coping strategies. Please read each statement carefully and choose your response from the four options given below. Indicate to the left of the statement the number that best describes how you think.

0=Not at all, 1= A little, 2= Moderate, 3= A great deal

No	Statement	0	1	2	3
1.	Looked for a stronger connection with God.				
2.	Sought God's love and care.				
3.	Sought help from God in letting go of my anger				
4.	Tried to put my plans into action together with God.				
5.	Tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation.				
6.	Asked forgiveness for my sins.				
7.	Focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems.				
8.	Wondered whether God has abandoned me.				
9.	Felt punished by God for my lack of devotion.				
10.	Wondered what I did for God to punish me.				
11.	Questioned God's love for me.				
12.	Questioned God's mercy for me.				
13.	Decided my destiny made this happen.				
14.	Questioned the power of God				

APPENDIX III**Educational Stress Scale for Adolescent (ESSA) (SUN, Dunne, Hou and Xu 2010)**

This scale consists of 16 items describing the stress in your institution/college life from the various sources. The level of stress you feel for each item can be indicated by marking in the bracket given against each statement. If you feel No Stress put a mark in the 1 bracket(NS), Slight Stress in the 2(SS), Moderate Stress in the 3(MS), High Stress in the 4(HS) and you feel Extreme Stress put a mark in the 5 bracket(ES).

1=No Stress, 2= Slight Stress, 3= Moderate Stress, 4= High Stress, 5= Extreme Stress

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	There is too much competition among classmates which brings me a lot of academic pressure.					
2.	I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying.					
3.	Future education and employment bring me a lot of academic pressure					
4.	My parents care about my academic grades too much which brings me a lot of pressure					
5.	I feel that I have disappointed my teacher when my test/exam results are not ideal					
6.	I feel that I have disappointed my parents when my test/exam results are poor					
7.	Academic grade is very important to my future and even can determine my whole life					
8.	I am very dissatisfied with my academic grades					
9.	I always lack confidence with my academic scores					
10.	It is very difficult for me to concentrate during classes					
11.	I feel stressed when I do not live up to my own standards					
12.	When I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel I am not good enough					
13.	I usually cannot sleep and worry when I cannot meet the goals I set for myself					
14.	I feel there is too much homework					
15.	I feel that there is too much school work					
16.	I feel that there are too many tests /exams in the school					