

An Exploration of Intrinsic Spirituality within the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide and its Role in Suicide Prevention



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BACKGROUND

- ❖ Spirituality can help people navigate their mental health by providing individuals with a sense of purpose and self-worth.
- ❖ Interpersonal Theory of Suicide - two primary contributors to suicidal ideation and behaviors:
 - ❖ Thwarted Belongingness (TB) & Perceived Burdensomeness (PB)
- ❖ A strong internal sense of spirituality may help to minimize feelings of TB and PB, therefore helping people feel more connected and resilient.
- ❖ Participants who reported having a "meaning in life" had lower suicidal ideation over time and reduced lifetime odds of a suicide attempt
- ❖ These findings suggest that interventions focusing on enhancing meaning in life could help reduce suicide risk (Kleiman, Beaver, 2013).
- ❖ Existential well-being – a sense of meaning and purpose in life – was significantly associated with lower suicidal ideation.
- ❖ Existential well-being had a stronger association with mental health compared to traditional religious factors (Taliaferro, et.al, 2009).

RESEARCH QUESTION

- ❖ Does a higher level of intrinsic spirituality, as measured by the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (ISS), serve as a protective factor against TB and PB, ultimately reducing the frequency of suicidal ideation and behaviors?
- ❖ We aim to explore on how spirituality may serve as a protective factor against suicide risk.

KEY TERMS

- ❖ **Intrinsic Spirituality**: a deeply personal connection to Transcendence, expressed through individual beliefs. It focuses on personal meaning and purpose, independent of external validation.
- ❖ **Religion**: a set of communal beliefs and practices shared by individuals within a specific group. It is an external expression of spiritual experiences.
- ❖ **Thwarted Belongingness (TB)**: the feeling of disconnectedness or isolation from peers.
- ❖ **Perceived Burdensomeness (PB)**: the feeling that one is a burden or liability to others.
- ❖ **Suicidal Ideation**: thoughts or plans about dying

METHODS

- ❖ Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (ISS): measures the degree to which spirituality is internalized as a part of identity and purpose.
- ❖ Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ): assesses levels of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness.
- ❖ Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS): evaluates the severity and frequency of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ Spirituality has been a source of hope, meaning, and inner strength for individuals facing adversity, reminding people that they are not alone and that their lives hold purpose beyond their pain.
- ❖ Our study explores whether intrinsic spirituality can be used as a protective factor against TB, PB, and suicidal ideation and behaviors.
- ❖ We predict that individuals with *higher levels* of intrinsic spirituality *would experience lower levels* of suicidal ideation, as spirituality may foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of burdensomeness.
- ❖ Our findings will help to clarify this relationship within a college population. If our results show a significant correlation between intrinsic spirituality and suicide risk factors, our research could further support the role of spirituality in mediating mental health struggles and highlight its potential use in suicide prevention efforts.



REFERENCES

