A Multiple Mediator Model for the Association between Religiosity and Suicidal Behavior

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INTRODUCTION

The Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Ideation (ITS) posits 3 constructs necessary for suicide (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden et al., 2010) which have been shown to mediate risk factors for suicidal behavior

- Threatened Belongingness (i.e., Social Integration)
- Perceived Burdenomeness (i.e., Life Meaning)
- Acquired Capability (i.e., Behavioral Regulation)

This study tested whether ITS constructs mediated the protective association between Religiosity and Suicidal Behavior (Cusick & Martin, 2010; Gearing & Lisardo, 2009; Koning, 2009).

Tested in a full competitive model of mediators, including:

- Social integration
- Behavioral Regulation
- Life Meaning

Hope (Kramer, 2002; Petret, 2007)

OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate whether the Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Ideation (ITS) can explain, at least partially, the association between a protective factor (i.e., Religiosity) and history of suicidal behavior
- To compare indirect effects of ITS constructs against other competing potential mediators (i.e., Hopelessness and Meaning)

METHOD

- All procedures were reviewed and approved by the Florida State University Institutional Review Board
- After demonstrating and providing informed consent, participants were asked to complete a single battery of self-report questionnaires online (30-45 minutes). Measures included:
  - Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) → Religiosity
  - Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire - Thwarted Belongingness (INQ-TB) → Social Integration
  - Acquired Capability for Suicide Scale (ACSS) → Behavioral Regulation
  - Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) → Hope
  - Meaning in Life Questionnaire - Presence (MLQ-P) → Life Meaning
  - Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire – Revised (SBQ-R) → Suicidal Behavior
- Indirect effects quantified via path analysis and a product-of-coefficients approach (see Preacher & Hayes, 2008) of each dimension of the DUREL (i.e., Organized Religious Activity, Non-Organized Religious Activity, and Intrinsic Religiosity)

RESULTS

Table 1: Independent Mean Comparisons Between Religiosity, Usefulness and Affiliation (i.e., Christian Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organized EA</td>
<td>3.88 (.86)</td>
<td>3.58 (.68)</td>
<td>3.47 (1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Organized EA</td>
<td>2.67 (.69)</td>
<td>2.70 (.98)</td>
<td>2.73 (.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.98 (.69)</td>
<td>1.08 (.87)</td>
<td>1.19 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQ-TB</td>
<td>1.54 (.52)</td>
<td>1.60 (.52)</td>
<td>1.69 (.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>1.56 (.52)</td>
<td>1.60 (.52)</td>
<td>1.69 (.52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Standardized Path Coefficients for the Association between Religiosity and Suicidal Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Path Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQ-TB</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHS</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBQ-R</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

Although Religiosity is a significant predictor of Suicidal Behavior, it can be a morally charged and non-malleable trait, limiting its clinical utility
- The proposed mediators, more neutral and malleable psychological constructs, in combination accounted for more than 50% of the association between Religiosity and Suicidal Behavior

In univariate tests, each of the proposed mediators were predictive of Suicidal Behavior; however, only Hopelessness and Meaning related to each of the three dimensions of Religiosity. Thwarted Belongingness was related to Intrinsic Religiosity only
- Meaning in Life was the only construct that fully mediated the association between Religiosity and Suicidal Behavior. Hopelessness and Thwarted Belongingness were additional partial mediators

The Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Ideation is supported by numerous studies regarding its contributory explanation of risk factors; however, it is limited in explaining the effects of Religiosity, a protective factor
- For this population, individual constructs (i.e., Life Meaning and Hope) accounted for the protective relationship of Religiosity on Suicidal Behavior. Interpersonal constructs (i.e., Thwarted Belongingness and Acquired Capability) were generally not related to Religiosity, with the exception of Intrinsic Religiosity

REFERENCES


