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Abstract

Recent years have seen growing interest in empirical religious research within the Islamic context. This paper contributes to that growth by exploring the reliability of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam. The scale is a 23-item instrument which measures attitudes toward Islam on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 729 English speaking Pakistani young people (45% male and 55% female) completed the FSCAI. The data demonstrated that the scale is a reliable measure achieving a Cronbach Alpha of .91 and accounting for 37.4% of the variance. The measure is recommended for further research in the Muslim context.

Keywords: Sahin-Francis Scale, Islam, Reliability, Pakistan.

Introduction

Attitudes toward Christianity in the Western world have been extensively studied and are an established area of research (Francis, 1987; Francis, 1989; Goldman, 1964; Bourke, Francis & Robbins, 2005; Gibson, 1989). A significant amount of empirical data relating to the antecedents, consequences, and psychological characteristics of religiosity in the Christian world have been brought together to form a coherent traditional of research (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003). This research has been largely carried out by developing well-constructed and well-tested psychometric measures such as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity that measures different aspects of religiosity (see for example Kay & Francis, 1996, Penny, 2014).

However, there is a dearth of research on the influence and consequence of religiosity within other faiths traditions. In order to develop a comparative tradition of research for other faiths it is first necessary to develop equally robust measurement tools. This work has been undertaken relatively recently and has led to the development of valid and reliable measures such as the Katz-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism (Francis & Katz, 2002, 2007) and the Santosh-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism (Francis, Santosh, Robbins & Bhanot, 2008). The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam (Sahin & Francis, 2002) was developed to measure the affective attitude of Muslims to their faith and their belief system.

The original Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity was initially published in 1978 and is constituted of 24-items scored on a five-point Likert scale. It consists of both positively and negatively framed questions which examine the affective responses to five different components of Christianity (God, Jesus, bible, prayer and church). The reliability

and validity of the scale has been tested in numerous countries and amongst different population cohorts (Francis, 1987, 1989; Fulljames & Francis, 1987; Francis & McCarron, 1989; Francis & Greer, 1990; Francis, Kerr & Lewis, 2005; Francis, Lewis, Philipchalk, Brown & Lester, 1995, Maltby, 1994, Lewis & Maltby, 1995, Francis & Thomas, 2003: Ferreira & Neto, 2002: Francis & Enger, 2003; Francis, Lewis & Ng, 2002, 2003; Lewis & Hermans, 2003; Lewis & Francis, 2004; Munayer, 2000).

The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam uses the well-established Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity as a prototype to develop a parallel instrument within the Islamic context. The items from the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity were considered by Muslim scholars in order to develop a parallel instrument for testing among the Muslim population. This led to an agreement on using 23 items, scored on a 5-point Likert scale which assessed similar areas as the parent scale (Sahin & Francis, 2002) and consisted of both positively and negatively framed questions. The Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam was originally developed to study attitudes among British Muslim youth and the role of Islamic education (Sahin, 2002). The initial research demonstrated the internal consistency, reliability and construct validity of the scale.

The use of negative items in the scale has been contested. For example, when the scale was translated into Arabic for a study among young adults living in Kuwait (Francis, Sahin, & Al-Ansan, 2006) the negative items were reworded to read as positive items. For example 'Allah/God doesn't mean anything to me' was changed to read 'Allah/God means everything to me'. More recently a similar approach was taken in translating the scale into Urdu (Musharraf, Lewis, & Sultan, 2014) where the negative items were also rephrased into positive statements. The changes from negative statements to positive statements was made based on the same rationale employed in the Arabic translation, namely that there was a perception that negative items were not as culturally acceptable outside of the UK. It should also be noted that within the Urdu translation the question with regard to mosque attendance was changed from 'Attending the Mosque is very important to me' to 'Attending the Mosque or religious gatherings is very important to me' because in Pakistan women do not often worship at the mosque. The factorial structure and validity of the scale has also been tested on University students in Pakistan (Khan & Watson, 2006). Their results showed the scale to be valid and reliable but the Pakistani data was not unidimensional in contrast to the British sample. Khan and Watson (2006) found a three factor solution to the scale with alpha co-effecients of .88, .82 and .66. Francis, Sahin, and Al-Ansari (2006) employed the adapted version of the scale employing positive items. They report an alpha co-efficient of .85

accounting for 28.8% of the variance. The psychometric properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam have been examined in a study with young adults living in Kuwait (Francis, Sahin & Al-Failakawi, 2008) employing the original version of the scale. The following results were reported alpha .80 and accounting for 26% of the variance. If the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam is to be used as a successful tool to better identify Muslim attitudes it needs to be further tested in Islamic societies and within different populations (Khan & Watson, 2006; Francis, Sahin & Al-Ansari, 2006). As Hermans and Sterkens (2014) point out construct equivalence is important when conducting such comparisons across religious groups with scales of this nature. It is the construct of 'attitude toward' Islam that is the key just as for the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity it is the construct of 'attitude toward' Christianity.

The present study analyses the psychometric properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale among a sample of English–speaking students from Pakistani Universities in the port city of Karachi. The students were a mixture of social science students from Karachi University and medical students from the Aga Khan University. Once the psychometric properties of the scale have been effectively established the scale can be employed more widely within the Pakistani context. It can also be employed to explore other aspects of belief and practice. Consequently the present study as three aims: first to establish the reliability of the English language original version of the Sahin-Francis scale within the cultural context of Pakistan. Second, to consider if the negative items adversely impact the scale properties if they are not translated in Urdu? Third, to consider the contribution the question regarding mosque attendance has to the overall scale among a sample of men and women when kept in its original form?

Method

Procedure

Pakistani students were invited to take part in the project during normal lecture time. All participants signed informed consent forms before completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was approved by the Glyndwr Ethics Committee and by each university within Pakistan that took part in the research. Participants were informed that the information they provided was anonymous, they were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study up to the point of submission of their questionnaire.

Instrument

All the original 23 items of the Sahin-Francis Scale were used with no changes. Responses for each item were scored on a five point Likert-type scale: *agree strongly*, *agree*, *not certain*, *disagree*, and *disagree strongly*.

The participants also answered background questions. The questions asked about the participant's gender, age, religious denomination (*none, shia, sunni, ismaili, other-specify*), and frequency of prayer (assessed on a five point scale: *five times a day, several times a week, every Friday, sometimes, never*) and their attendance at the Mosque (assessed on a six point scale: *never, once or twice a year, sometimes, at least once a month, weekly* and *daily*).

Data analysis

The data were analysed by SPSS, employing the following routines: frequencies, chi-square, reliabilities, factor analysis and correlations.

Sample

The questionnaire was completed by 729 English-speaking students in Pakistan. The sample comprised 55% females and 45% males. A total of 33% were under the age of 20 and 67% were aged between 20 and 29 years of age. The majority of the participants were Shia (23%), followed by Sunni (9%) and Ismaili (3%). The largest group (62%) declared that they had no religious affiliation. There were 28% of participants who said they never prayed, nearly a third (32%) said that they prayed sometimes, 23% said that they prayed several times a week, 8% said that they prayed every Friday, and 16% said that they prayed five times a day. Karachi is the largest and most populated city in Pakistan with an extremely diverse population (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics). Muslim's of all affiliations are citizens of Karachi. It might be that the educated youth as being in contact with a diverse range of Muslims is less concerned about religious affiliations. It would be interesting to see if similar results are found in other cities of Pakistan with a more uniform population.

Results

Table 1 presents the frequency of mosque attendance and prayer frequency by sex.

-insert table 1 about here-

Over a quarter of the men and women (28%) report they never pray. More than twice as many of the women (22%) as the men (10%) report they pray five times a day. Over a quarter

(26%) of the men report they go to the mosque weekly. Nearly half (46%) of the women report they never go to the mosque while 39% of the men say they never attend.

Because within the Pakistani context (as noted above) women rarely attend mosque exploration of the three mosque items which form part of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam were considered by sex. A chi-square analysis demonstrates that women are significantly more likely to agree (18%) than the men (6%) that going to the mosque is a waste of my time (X^2 27.62, p< .001). Men are significantly more likely to agree that attending mosque is important to me (82%) than women (64%; X^2 24.47, p< .001). In response to the question I think mosque sermons are boring there were no significant differences between the men and the women (men 23%; women 22%, X^2 .11, p< NS). Given these differences the item-rest-of-test correlations were conducted separately for men and women. This gave an overall alpha co-efficient for the scale of .88 for men and .93 for women. With regard to the item attending the mosque is very important to me women recorded an r of .39 and men of .38. With regard to the item I think going to the mosque is a waste of my time men recorded an r of .39 and women of .38. Given these results further scale analysis was not conducted separately for men and women.

Table two presents the item-rest-of-test of the 23 items of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam, along with the alpha coefficient and percentage item endorsement. The percentage item endorsement represents the total of the 'agree strongly' and 'agree' responses.

-insert Table 2 about here-

The Cronbach alpha is .91 well in excess of the .65 recommended by DeVellis (1991). A one factor solution accounts for 37.4% of the variance. In order to test the construct validity the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam was correlated with frequency of prayer and mosque attendance. Age and sex were both controlled for. A significant positive correlations was found with both frequency of prayer X^2 =.16, p < .001) and frequency of mosque attendance (X^2 = .11, p < .01).

Conclusion

The present study has explored the psychometric properties of the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam in 729 English speaking students in Pakistan. The data supports the

reliability of this instrument within the given population. The scale can be recommended as a valuable tool for future research within Islamic contexts. The use of the scale will help establish a robust knowledge base within Islamic contexts. These data will enable comparisons with attitudes toward other world religions and may lead to new insights in cross-cultural research.

The results demonstrate that the decision taken by Francis, Shaing, and Al-Ansan (2006) and Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan (2014) to rephrase negative items in their translations so they are positive is shown not to be necessary in an English speaking Islamic context. Consideration does need to be given to the role that mosque attendance plays in the lives of the men and women in Pakistan. As the results demonstrate women are significantly less likely to report attending mosque is important to them than the men. Considering that this does not tend to form part of their weekly religious observance this is not surprising. Although women may not attend the mosque frequently within the Pakistan context it does not necessarily follow that the infrequent attendance is not as important to women as the more frequent attendance of the men, significance should not be conflated with frequency.

Within the Pakistan context the English version of the Sahin-Francis Scale accounts for a greater percentage of the variance (37.4%) than the Urdu translation presented by Musharraf, Lewis and Sultan (2014) where 31.18% of the variance was explained.

The percentage of those who attend mosque by sex is surprising given the cultural context, with over a third (39%) of the men stating that they never attend mosque. In the Pakistani context men are encouraged to attend mosque regularly whereas women are more likely to pray in the private space of their home (Pew Research Center, 2011-2012). Although care should be taken in the interpretation of this finding given that the sample are university students, further research among different groups within this context is needed employing this questionnaire.

As it is consistently found within the psychology of religion across different religious groups and different contexts the practice of prayer is more frequently engaged in by women; with the present sample this is supported by twice as many women (22%) as men (10%) reporting that they pray five times a day.

The development of reliable scales like the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam will help develop empirical research within Muslim contexts allowing for greater potential for cross cultural research. The development of proper psychometric tools that are thoroughly tested within the Muslim context will facilitate the growth of this important

research area. The results presented here suggest that there is a construct equivalence in the employment of the scale (Hermans & Sterkens, 2014).

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Table 1: Mosque attendance and prayer frequency by sex

	male %	female %
Prayer		
Never	28	28
Sometimes	37	28
Every Friday	2	0
Several times a week	24	23
Five times a day	10	22
Mosque		
Never	39	46
Once or twice a year	19	23
Sometimes	0	3
Least once a month	7	8
Weekly	26	17
Daily	9	4

Table 2: Item-rest-of-test correlations and item endorsement

Item	%	r
I find it inspiring to listen to the Quran	89	.63
I know that Allah/God helps me	89	.68
Saying my prayers/dua helps me a lot	98	.68
Attending the Mosque is very important to me	72	.40
I think going to the Mosque is a waste of my time*	11	.35
I want to obey Allah/God's law/*shariah* in my life	88	.35
I think Mosque sermons/*khutbah* are boring*	20	.24
Allah/God helps me to lead a better life	92	.60
I like to learn about Allah/God very much	88	.67
Allah/God means a lot to me	89	.73
I believe that Allah/God helps people	84	.71
Prayer/*salat* helps me a lot	87	.63
I feel that I am very close to Allah/God	57	.33
I think praying/salat is a good thing	85	.67
I think the Quran is out of date*	12	.52
I believe that Allah/God listens to prayers/*dua*	90	.53
Allah/God doesn't mean anything to me*	10	.59
Allah/God is very real to me	88	.58
I think praying/*dua* does no good*	13	.55
Belief in Allah/God means much to me	91	.65
I find it hard to believe in Allah/God*	19	.33
I am happy to be a Muslim	87	.59
I love to follow the life/*sunnah* of the Prophet	82	.56
Alpha		.91

*These items were reverse coded: %= the total of the agree strongly and the agree responses.