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ABSTRACT

The objective is to study the level of Death Anxiety among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The study was conducted on a sample of 270 participants (90 Adolescent, 90 Adulthood, 90 Old age) on an age group of 16-85 and the results was tabulated using the statistical measure of ANOVA and Pearson’s product moment correlation and the results showed that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety across religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in DAS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety in Adulthood across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Old Age across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in MFODS is rejected.

INTRODUCTION

Death Anxiety

Although there has been considerable amount of studies in the last several years, the definition of Death Anxiety is still unsure to this date. Earlier researcher have defined Death Anxiety as an uneasiness about one’s extinction and dying process. Tomer (1992) further elaborated Death Anxiety as the anticipation of the state that one is not alive, including aspects of fear of dying or the death of significant others. More recently, a generally agreeable definition of Death Anxiety would be “A cluster of Death Anxiety characterized by fear, threat unease, discomfort and similar negative emotional reaction, as well as anxiety in the psychoanalytic sense as a kind of diffusion fear that has no clear object. (Neimeyer, 1997)”Death anxiety is an attitude that an individual holds towards death. It is defined as a negative and apprehensive feeling that one has when thinking about death and dying and is used interchangeably with fear of death.

“Death anxiety” is a term used to conceptualize the apprehension generated by death awareness (Abdel-Khalek, 2005). Humans are unique in that they must learn to live and adapt to the consciousness of their own finiteness (Becker, 1973). Thus a major task for cultural systems is to provide a symbolic structure that addresses death and provides meaning for its occurrence and a context for its transcendence (Becker 1973; Kuhler-Ross, 2005). Confronting death and the anxiety generated by knowledge of its inevitability is a universal psychological quandary for humans. For health care providers, death is an ever-present reality despite increasing technologically advanced health systems, longer patient survival, and cure from life-threatening conditions. Although helping individuals and their families manage death is a central responsibility of nursing worldwide and an increasing literature suggests that death anxiety contributes to important emotional and behavioral outcomes, theoretical and empirical background of the concept has not been systematically examined in the nursing literature. This limitation has led to a dearth of literature that has explored death anxiety as an important variable.

Religion

Religion is derived from the Latin religio, the ultimate origins of which are obscure. According to the philologist Max Muller, the root of the English word "religion", the Latin religio, was originally used to mean only "reverence for God or the gods, careful pondering of divine things, piety. Max Muller characterized many other cultures around the world, including Egypt, Persia, and India, as having a similar power structure at this point in history. What is called ancient religion today, they would have only called "law". There are many definitions of religion and only a few are stated here. The typical dictionary definition of religion refers to a "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods "or the "service and worship of God or the supernatural". However, writers and scholars have expanded upon the "belief in god" definitions as insufficient to capture the diversity of religious thought and experience.Edward Burnett Tylor defined religion as "the belief in spiritual beings". He argued that narrowing the definition to mean the belief in a supreme deity or judgment after death or idolatry and so on, would exclude many peoples from the category of religious, and thus "has the fault of identifying religion rather with particular developments than with the deeper motive which underlies them". He also argued that the belief in spiritual beings exists in all known societies. The sociologist Durkheim, in his seminal book The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and
practices relative to sacred things". By sacred things he meant things "set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them". Sacred things are not, however, limited to gods or spirits. On the contrary, a sacred thing can be "a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word, anything can be sacred". Religious beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are the representations that express the nature of these sacred things, and the virtues and powers which are attributed to them.

In his book The Varieties of Religious Experience, the psychologist William James defined religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine". By the term "divine" James meant "any object that is godlike, whether it be a concrete deity or not" to which the individual feels impelled to respond with solemnity and gravity. When religion is seen in terms of "sacred", "divine", intensive "valuing", or "ultimate concern", then it is possible to understand why scientific findings and philosophical criticisms (e.g. Richard Dawkins) do not necessarily disturb its adherents.

What is religion and what is religious faith are questions that are either from the outside or from within, must nowadays be set in a wide context and a rather exacting one. The modern student may look upon religion as something that other people do, or he may see and feel it as something in which also he himself is involved.

In either case he approaches any attempt to understand it conscious not only of many traditional problems but also of new complications. Sensitive men have ever known that they are dealing here with a mystery. Some modern investigators have thought to strip the phenomena, of any transcendent reference, to explain by explaining away. Yet their explanation however persuasive each one might sound at first, have proven mutually discordant. They have left the sensitive still in the presence of an open elements, unknown or undominated, but one that is surrounded now with a formidable range of new data bearing on the matter in an elaborate and perplexing way.

Many consideration must be taken into account in any analysis that is to satisfy a serious modern inquirer. We may enumerate four or five as among the weightier. First, there is science. This impinges both in a general and in several particular ways. It is relevant in its broadest coverage, as signifying the growing body of knowledge about the empirical universe in all its sweep; as signifying also the practical mastery that it imparts. It is relevant also more specifically in so far as particular studies such as psychology, sociology, economic history, and also the ad hoc sciences of Religionswissenschaft have seemed to illuminate the ostensibly religious behaviour of man. Science radically modifies life intellectually and practically; as well as modifying the scholar’s understanding of its process. Secondly, there is the multiplicity of religious tradition. In addition to a myriad of lesser groups, there are on earth not on one but at least four or five major religious communities each proclaiming a faith with a long and impressive, even brilliant, past and with the continuing creative allegiance of mighty civilizations. This is known in theory: the knowledge is today supplemented in practice by personal contact and widespread social intermingling. Any adequate interpretation of a Christian’s faith, for instance, must make room for the fact that other intelligent, devout, and moral men, including perhaps his own friends, are Buddhists, Hindus or Muslims.

Somewhat related to this consideration is the further fact of diversity within each tradition. Each faith appears in a variety of forms. Regarded from another angel, this may be seen as a problem of authority, the multiplicity of guidance with which modern man is faced religiously, which may approximate to an absence of guidance. It is no longer easy or even possible to have a religious faith without selecting its form. Next may be noted the sheer fact of change. The world is in flux. Like other aspects of human life, the religious aspect too is seen to be historical, evolving, in process. Any modern endeavours to clarify what religion is, must now include a question as to what at various stages of development religion has been. And if it does not venture on some speculation as to what it may become in the future, at least there is recognition that, like everything else that we know on earth, religion may be expected to continue to change.

Finally, we would mention the vitality of faith. The problems besetting a satisfactory understanding of religion are increasingly evident. Yet religion itself continuous, and in many parts of the world appears perhaps to be resurgent. For a time some thought that the onslaught of science, comparative religion, uncertainty and the rest the onslaught of modernity which meant the gradual decline and disappearance of the religious tradition. This no longer seems obvious. From within, the man of faith must strive to attain some exposition of that faith that will do justice to the values that even in the modern world are being made available to him.

Need for the Study

The topic Death anxiety has not been frequently studied though we can trace its roots back to our ancient literature which gives few instances about death anxiety and death depression. Death anxiety has been one of an important topic of discussion from the last ten years but it has not been conducted on an Indian population. As I have conducted my previous research on death anxiety among middle age and old age, it was observed that middle age ranging from 45-64 years have higher levels of death anxiety. Hence I wanted to conduct further research using various variables such as religion and developmental age as it was a suggestions provided by the participants from my previous research. When I started reading about the various works conducted on this field it was noted that there was a very limited review of literature and not many research have been conducted in the Indian population using the various variables. Thus it was necessary to assess the effect of death anxiety among the Indian population.

Review of Literature

Nelson L D, Cantrell C H (1980) conducted a study on "Religiosity and Death Anxiety: A multidimensional Analysis". Theoretical and empirical studies of religion's effects on human frustration and anxiety are reviewed. The multi-dimensionality of death anxiety is discussed in relationship to studies employing religion as an independent variable. The utility of religious belief and practice in predicting death anxiety is explored with survey data from a state- wide probability sample (N=1,279). Curvilinearity in the relationships between religiosity and all the dimensions of death anxiety—death avoidance, death fear, death denial, and reluctance to interact with the dying—is evident; religious practice is a better predictor of death anxiety than religious belief. In the multiple regression analysis, religion is found to explain more of the variance in death fear and reluctance to interact with the dying than does the combination of income, education, age, occupational status, area reared, and area of residence. Thorson JA, Powell FC (1989) conducted a study on
“Death anxiety and religion in an older male sample”. A death anxiety scale and a measure of intrinsic religious motivation were completed by 103 older white men. The correlation of scale scores was non-significant. Afterlife items on the death anxiety scale did correlate significantly with the intrinsic religious motivation score. Other elements of religiosity, such as religious behaviours, may be related to elements of death anxiety.

SiminRosdheidh, Donald I. Templar, W. et al., (1999) conducted an study on “The Relationships of Death Anxiety and Death Depression to Religion and Civilian War-Related Experiences in Iranians”. Of eleven hundred seventy-six Iranian college students, those who were more exposed to war-related traumatic events and those who were less religious had higher death anxiety and death depression. The specific variables that contributed the most variance to both death anxiety and death depression were weaker religious belief, female gender, and injury to friends or relatives, death of friends or relatives, not believing in life after death, and maintaining that the most important aspect of religion is life after death. Falkenhain Marc, Handal J Paul (2003) conducted a study on the relationship between religion, belief in afterlife, and death attitudes (death anxiety and death acceptance) in an elderly population using instruments with sound psychometric properties. Survey data was collected from 71 elderly participants. Results indicated a strong correlation between belief in afterlife and intrinsic religion, and differential statistically significant relationships between intrinsic religion and both death anxiety and death acceptance depending on whether the effects of belief in afterlife were partial out. Findings were discussed in light of the absence of clinically meaningful results and, the role that belief in afterlife appears to play in the literature investigating religion and death anxiety.

Jessie Dezutter, Bart Soenens, Koen Luyckx, Sabrina Bruyneel, Maarten Vansteenkiste, Bart Duriez, and Dirk Hutsebaut (2006) conducted a study on “Distinguishing Between Religious Belief and Style of Processing Religious Contents” Although it is widely assumed that religiosity plays an important role in individuals’ attitudes about death, research to date has failed to reveal consistent associations between religiosity and death attitudes. Drawing from Wulff’s multidimensional model of religiosity, the present study examined associations between religion and death attitudes. First, results show that religious people are more likely to endorse an approach acceptance attitude towards death, indicating that religiosity as such is related to belief in afterlife. Second, people holding a literal attitude towards religion report more death anxiety, indicating that the processing of religious contents is related to defensiveness via death. Mustafa Yüksel Erdogdu (2008) conducted a study on “Predicting Death Anxiety by Psychological Dispositions of Individuals from Different Religions”. The purpose of this study is the prediction of death anxiety with symptom distress of individuals from different religions. The study includes 240 people as a sample who are Syrian, Yazidi and Muslim, were chosen randomly from Mardin, Batman, Diyarbakir and Sanlurfa. From symptom distress respectively, for Syrian people, anxiety and interpersonal sensitivity; for Muslim people, interpersonal sensitivity, somatization, obsession, paranoid, anger and additional variables; for Yazidi people have somatization, obsession, paranoid, phobia, additional variables are seen as an important reasonable prediction of death anxiety.

Gareth J. Morris, Tina McAdie (2009) conducted a survey on “Are personality, well-being and death anxiety related to religious affiliation?” A survey design was used to examine if there are any differences between a Christian, a Muslim, and a non-religious group in five personality factors (dominance, liveliness, warmth, apprehension, and sensitivity), general well-being, and death anxiety. No significant differences were found with any of the personality factors between the three groups. Religious participants (Christians and Muslims combined) scored significantly higher for general well-being than non-religious participants. Christians scored significantly lower for death anxiety than both non-religious and Muslim groups, and Muslims scored significantly higher than the non-religious group. These findings are discussed with reference to Terror Management Theory. Ya-Hui Wen (2010) conducted a study on “Religiosity and Death Anxiety”. This study explored the relationship between religiosity and death anxiety. One hundred sixty-five church participants filled out the Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale, the Revised Death Anxiety Scale, and a personal questionnaire. Factor analyses, Pearson correlation, and linear and quadratic regression analyses were conducted. The found results a positive relationship between intrinsic religious motivation and frequency of religious service attendance and strength of belief. Findings showed a linear and a quadratic relationship between death anxiety and intrinsic religious motivation. KhadijehRoshani (2012) conducted a study on “Relationship between religious beliefs and life satisfaction with death anxiety in the elderly” The present study aims to investigate the relationship between religious beliefs and life satisfaction with death anxiety in the elderly. A number of 120 elderly people were selected as the participants using cluster sampling. Arian’s Religiosity Questionnaire, Satisfaction with Life Scale and Collet – Lester’s Fear of Death Scale were used to collect the data. Pearson correlation formula and multiple regression analysis were run to analyze the data. The results showed a negative correlation between religious beliefs and death anxiety as well as between life satisfaction and death anxiety in the elderly. The results of regression analysis revealed that, from among the predictive variables, life satisfaction was the best predictor of death anxiety.

**Methodology**

**Aim**

To study the level of Death Anxiety among Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

**Objective**

- To examine the level of Death Anxiety among three Religions.
- To examine the level of Death Anxiety of Adolescents across Religious groups.
- To examine the level of Death Anxiety of Adulthood across Religious groups.
- To examine the level of Death Anxiety of Old age across Religious groups.

**Operational Definition**

**Death anxiety:** Death Anxiety refers to the anxiety that is generated about the perception of death. According to Abdel-Khalek (2005) “Death anxiety is a term used to conceptualize the apprehension generated by death awareness”

**Religious groups:** In this study religious groups refer to people who practice one the three main religions that is practised in India which are Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.
**Hinduism:** A religion where the participants follow a supreme being who have many forms or incarnations and they also follow the cultural practices predominant to the religion.

**Islam:** A religion where the participants believe that there is only one God and follow the sacred text of Quran. They believe in Mohammed as the prophet.

**Christianity:** A religion where the participants believe in the old testaments and the teachings of Jesus Christ and follow the holy text of Bible

**Hypothesis**
- There is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety across Religion in DAS and MFODS
- There is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in DAS and MFODS
- There is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adulthood across Religion in DAS and MFODS
- There is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Old Age across Religion in DAS and MFODS

**Research Design**
Comparative Research Design

**Variables**
Independent Variable: Religion, Developmental Ages
Dependent Variable: Death Anxiety

**Inclusion Criteria**
- Participants should be from three main religious background.
- Participants should be literate and should understand English language.
- Participants should be practising in their religion.

**Exclusion Criteria**
- Participants who have major health concerns will be excluded from the study.
- Participants who are nonbelievers will be excluded from the study.

**Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adolescence</th>
<th>Adulthood</th>
<th>Old age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Sampling Technique**
Purposive and Snowball Sampling method

**Tools**

**Demographic Sheet**-It is developed by the researcher to know the personal information from the participant. It mainly used to get the basic details such as name, age, gender, socio economic status, educational background.

**Death anxiety Scale by Donald Templar (2006)**-This questionnaire is developed by Donald Templar. It consists of 51 items which measures the various aspects of fear of dying. It is an open ended questionnaire which consists of true or false options.

**The Multi-Dimensional fear of death scale by Hoelter (1979)**-

**Guidelines for Focus group discussion**-The researcher has proposed almost thirteen questions which acts like a guideline for the research to carry forward the focus group discussion.

**Procedure**
Permission for the collection of data will be obtained from institutes and various participants who is taken part in the research process. The demographic detail of the subject will be collected.

**Phase 1-Quantitative Analysis**
The questionnaires will be administered to the participants once they have understood the instructions. All the questionnaires are self-administering. The questions would be asked verbally for the elderly who are not able to answer the questionnaires themselves whereas the other age groups have to respond to the questionnaires themselves and the subject had to respond to each question one after the other.

**Phase 2-Qualitative Analysis**
At the end of phase 1, a focus group of different religious groups which consist 6-10 participants of the various Religion that the study is focusing has been gathered and the guidelines of almost 13 questions were formulated using the results from the phase 1-quantitative analysis. The content of the focus group discussion was analysed and used to evaluate the quantitative analysis.

**Precautions**
- Should be careful of not hurting the religious sentiments of the participants
- Confidentiality should be maintained
- The participants should answer all the questions
- Doubts should be cleared before the participants answer the questions

**Statistical Techniques used**
- **Descriptive statistics** using mean and standard deviation
- **Inferential statistics** using Anova, Pearson product moment correlation
- **Focus Group Discussion** using Content Analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
The aim of the study the level of Death Anxiety among Hindus, Muslims and Christians across three developmental age groups and the objective of the study is to examine the level of Death Anxiety among three Religions, three developmental age, to examine the level of Death anxiety among Hindu, Muslim, Christian across developmental age, to examine the level of Death anxiety among Adolescent, Adulthood and Old age across Religion and To examine the relationship between Death Anxiety Scale and Multidimensional Fear of Death Scale across Religion and Developmental Age.

**Quantitative Analysis**
The mean and Standard deviation is obtained for the ‘Death Anxiety’ Scale on the basis of Religion. The highest mean score is
found for Hindus with a mean score of 16.81 with Std. deviation 3.67, followed by Muslims having mean 16.62 with a Std. deviation of 3.66. Christians have the least mean score of 16.07 with Std. deviation 3.2. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 16.51 with a Std. deviation 3.52. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 1.04 with a significance value 0.354 >0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores is not significant.

The mean and Standard deviation is obtained for ‘multi dimension fear of death’ scale on the basis of religion. The highest mean score is found for Hindus with a mean score of 15.84 with Std. deviation 1.24, followed by Christians with a mean of 15.74 and Std. deviation of 1.15. Muslims have the least mean score of 15.49 with Std. deviation 1.05. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 15.69 with a Std. deviation 1.16. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 2.085 with a significance value 0.127>0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores is not significant. Thus the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety across religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted. This is majorly due to the societal influence on the on the people.

One of the main being the Education system as in India education does not differ according to religion. According to few of the participants in the Focus group discussion, the level of death anxiety remains the same irrespective of the religious background as it is a universal concept. According to them, it is the way in which a person dies or the fear of Dying process and Life after death. Among the adolescent respondents who are followers of different religions, with respect to the ‘Death anxiety’ scale the mean score is the highest for Muslims (mean = 16.48 and SD = 3.76). This is followed by a mean score of 16.40 with SD 3.04 by Hindus. Christians exhibit the least mean score of 16.23 with SD 3.14 in all the dimensions. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 5.68 with a significance value 0.00 <0.05 which indicates that the mean scores do not differ significantly. The mean and Standard deviation is obtained for ‘multi dimension fear of death’ scale for the adolescent group belonging to different religions. The highest mean score is found for Hindus with a mean score of 16.07 with Std. deviation 1.28, followed by Christians with a mean of 15.38 and Std. deviation of 0.99. Muslims have the least mean score of 15.06 with Std. deviation 1.17. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 15.52 with a Std. deviation 1.21. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 5.68 with a significance value 0.00 <0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores differs significantly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Showing the result of Hindu, Muslim and Christian on DAS and MFODS scales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death Anxiety Scale</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi Dimension Fear of Death</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
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<td>Christian</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Thus the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in DAS is accepted and the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in MFODS is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted in Multi Dimension Fear of Death Scale. The level of Death Anxiety is high among Adolescent in MFODS scale. This is justified as the three religious groups shows high fear in the dying process that is one of the dimensions that the scale focus upon which is include the different methods of dying process. There are scared of dying painfully and violently as in everyday more news about individuals dying in an accident or being murdered is rampant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Showing the results of Adolescent across religion on DAS and MFODS scales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death Anxiety Scale</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi Dimension Fear of Death Scale</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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<td>Christian</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One of the main being the Education system as in India education does not differ according to religion. According to few of the participants in the Focus group discussion, the level of death anxiety remains the same irrespective of the religious background as it is a universal concept. According to them, it is the way in which a person dies or the fear of Dying process and Life after death. Among the adolescent respondents who are followers of different religions, with respect to the ‘Death anxiety’ scale the mean score is the highest for Muslims (mean = 16.48 and SD = 3.76). This is followed by a mean score of 16.40 with SD 3.04 by Hindus. Christians exhibit the least mean score of 16.23 with SD 3.14 in all the dimensions. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 5.68 with a significance value 0.00 <0.05 which indicates that the mean scores do not differ significantly. The mean and Standard deviation is obtained for ‘multi dimension fear of death’ scale for the adolescent group belonging to different religions. The highest mean score is found for Hindus with a mean score of 16.07 with Std. deviation 1.28, followed by Christians with a mean of 15.38 and Std. deviation of 0.99. Muslims have the least mean score of 15.06 with Std. deviation 1.17. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 15.52 with a Std. deviation 1.21. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 5.68 with a significance value 0.00 <0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores differs significantly.
The highest mean score is found for Christians with a mean score of 16.08 with Std. deviation 1.367, followed by Hindus with a mean of 15.58 and Std. deviation of 1.47. Muslims have the least mean score of 15.41 with Std. deviation 1.03. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 15.70 with a Std. deviation 1.32. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 2.12 with a significance value 0.13 >0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores do not differ significantly. Thus the null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adulthood across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted. The main reason is the influence of education as many of the adults in the study are highly educated. They are aware of the concept and importance of Death and that at one time it is necessary to die.

Table 3 Showing the results of Adulthood across religion on DAS and MFODS scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The main reason for this is that all the participants of this age involved in the study are highly religious and they believe in existence of God. They are of the view that they have finished all the important responsibilities and waiting for a call from the Supreme Being. Most of the literature review also supports the same. Irrespective of the religion they are in, Old age have the same outlook towards the Concept of Death. According to the focus group discussion, almost 50 percent of the participants have expressed that old age is more prone to having Death Anxiety and the possible reasons are attachment towards life and would not want to let go of it, denial towards the concept of Death and unpreparedness towards facing death, anxiousness as to what will happen next, after death situations especially of a loved ones and also of oneself where the anxiousness towards what will be their journey after death and where will it lead to. For example the concept of Heaven and Hell or the importance of past life experience.

**Qualitative Analysis-Focus Group Discussion**

The aim of Focus Group Discussion is to evaluate the deeper perception, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards the concept of Death and Death Anxiety. It was conducted on overall 26 participants including 10 Hindu, 8 Muslims and 8 Christians. A series of guidelines were prepared which consisted of 13 questions and the content was analysed and the most frequently used themes are given below in a tabular format.

**Negative Concept**

*No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life.*

But they are also apprehensive about the mode in which the death is going to occur. Though quantitatively they are not showing any level of Death anxiety, they fear that in current trends there are high chance of an unexpected phenomena to occur which can take one’s life. Among the old age group respondents who are followers of different religions, with respect to the ‘Death anxiety’ scale the mean score is the highest for Hindus. (mean = 17.33 and SD = 3.73). This is followed by a mean score of 16.70 with SD 2.81 by Christians. Muslims exhibit the least mean score of 16.67 with SD 3.70 in this scale. However when the three group means are compared for their equality by ANOVA, an F value of 0.29 and significance of 0.75 > 0.05 is obtained which indicates that the mean scores do not differ significantly. The mean and Standard deviation is obtained for ‘multi dimension fear of death’ scale for the Old age group belonging to different religions. The highest mean score is found for Muslims with a mean score of 15.94 with Std. deviation 0.79, followed by Hindus with a mean of 15.86 and Std. deviation of 0.89. Christians have the least mean score of 15.76 with Std. deviation 0.95. Overall the mean score of the respondents on this scale is 15.86 with a Std. deviation 0.87. When these mean scores are compared for equality by ANOVA, the F value is 0.30 with a significance value 0.74 <0.05 which indicates that the difference in means scores differs significantly. Thus the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Old Age across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted.

Table 4 Showing the results of Old Age across religion on DAS and MFODS scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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![Concept of Death and Death Anxiety](image-url)
It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new” Steve Jobs. One of the main themes that emerged was that death is seen as a negative concept. As per the interactions from the participants who had answered my questionnaires many of them had a negative approach towards the concept of death. Some of the participants also had a negative expression and they quoted that “Death is not a concept that has to be spoken about”. When asked about the same in the focus group discussion, the following factors emerged.

Death as a Taboo: Almost every participant said that one of the main reasons as to why it is a negative concept is because it is considered a taboo in the Indian society. It is a concept that is not spoken in the mainstream society. The thought about the Death as a taboo is equal to all irrespective of religion and developmental age. But two participants from the adolescent age group said that they individually didn’t know why it’s a taboo but considered it a taboo because their family thought that Death is a taboo. Another main reason is the traditional view about the death. Every adulthood and old age had the opinion that it is a taboo because the society have been following the same thought through the ancient times. One of the main taboo that is seen is towards the dead which includes touching the dead and those surrounding them, taboo against mourners and anything associated to the dead.

Death is Irreversible: One of the factors which emerged is that death is an irreversible action and hence the fear of the absolute as to what will happen during the process of death is seen. One of the participant in FGD quoted that “Once death comes, we know it’s the end…that’s scary”. Another participant quoted that “we don’t know when we are going to face death, but when it arrives, we know we cannot ask for one more chance to live…” These statements by few participants in FGD suggest that death is irreversible and that it is the end of life. But three adolescent participants countered the elders by stating the importance and advancement of technology where now there are latest medical tools that can help in increasing the mortality of one individual.

Emotions related to Death: The emotional reactions that is associated to death has always been negative. Emotions such as sadness, anger, betrayal etc. have an adverse effect on an individual. One adolescent even quoted that “Death is a grim experience”. Some of the adult also stated that “Death causes a lot of sadness to the family…and it takes time to come to the fact that the person is no more…” This is supported by Robert Lang’s theory of mind where Lang talks about “emotion processing mind” which has evolved in such a way that it separates out the deepest, most painful emotions from both the conscious and superficial unconscious experiences, stowing the painful and overwhelming emotions and anxieties in the deep unconscious system for the sake of easier conscious adaptation.

Death as Universal

“Death is more universal than life; everyone dies but not everyone lives.” A. Sachs. One of the themes is that Death is considered a universal concept. Most of the participants say that life and death are inseparable and that as quoted “If an individual is born then one or the other day he/she is supposed to die….no one lives forever”. Few participants have also said that they consider it universal because of the societal influence and that it moulds ones attitude towards their perception about death. Every participant in the Focus group discussion also supported that Death is universal and through the discussion few factors emerged.

Death is inevitable: Every participant in focus group discussion stated that Death is inevitable. Quoted by one of the participant “We cannot avoid death nor can we escape it…we don’t have a way out of it”. It is the same irrespective of the religion they are from. Participants in the focus group discussion also spoke about carriers of our soul, few old age participants in Hinduism spoke about the God of Death that is Yama who carries the soul to heaven or hell.

Destiny: Destiny according to the participants is defined as a “predetermined course of events. Hence every one’s destiny is already been written before they are born” Every participant said that Death is destiny and that it is unavoidable. It is already been predestined that if a person is born they are destined to die. Some of them even spoke about fate or karma which is seen as a guidance force which makes each one of us move through our life and to reach what we are destined for. One of the participant even quoted that “If the person is going to die then they will have to accept it by spiritual means”

Ultimate Truth: Death never changes. It comes to everything that has life. One participant quoted that “Every living being faces the truth called Death”. This is considered as the ultimate truth of life. Another participant quoted that “We cannot escape death….its the ultimate truth”

Connection to God: Almost all the participant said that Death is a means to connect with the supreme-being or God. The participants who were from the old age group spoke about the importance of spirituality and that death is more of a pathway to reach god. But few of the adolescent participants did not agree with this and by being more spiritual there are tendency to be detached from the worldly affairs and that can increase the effect of one’s anxiety towards death. One of the adult participant quoted that “Everything happens for a reason and if there is anything bad happening then spirituality is the only way out of it.......” Most of the Old age participants who was a part of my quantitative analysis said that “Death is a way to meet God…and that I’m just waiting for the call from him so that I can be with him.”

Relationship between Death Anxiety and Religion

In the focus group discussion the relationship between death anxiety and religion was further discussed. It was seen that 25 participants had said that there is a relationship between death anxiety and religion. According to them the way to overcome the fear of death is by having faith in god. According to one of the participants “It is a way to transfer the negative energy and turn
into positive belief…” According to the participants the way to achieve this is through Yoga and Meditation whereas one participant said that there is no relation between death anxiety and religion as death is a universal concept and that nobody can escape it. It is necessary to accept the reality that everyone has to die and in today’s world its “survival of the fittest”

Reactions about Death

According to the focus group discussion, the participants who were from Hindu religion believed that one of the reasons is karma. According to one of the participants, if you have done something bad in the previous life, we have to face the consequence of it in the present life…even if it means death. One of the main reactions that came up is the pathway to nirvana. According to one of the Elderly participant, nirvana is a way to attain ultimate happiness and according to him, death is the only way in which we can bring about nirvana. According to the participants who were from Muslim religion spoke about the importance of Jannat and Jahannum. The anxiety is towards the path where the individual will reach after death. Whether it will be Jannat or Jahannum. According to a participant, Jannat is the where everyone wants to go after death and that to reach there they will have to follow the rules set by the prophet. But if we break any rules then we will have to pay for it in Jahannum. According to the participants from Christian religion spoke about the concept of heaven and hell and that they believe in eternal life and that to attain eternal life one should do good deeds.

Summary and Conclusion

The objective is to study the level of Death Anxiety among Hindus, Muslims and Christians and the objective of the study is to examine the level of Death Anxiety among three Religions, to examine the level of Death anxiety among Adolescent, Adulthood and Old age across Religion. The hypothesis was there is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety across Religion in DAS and MFODS, there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in DAS and MFODS, there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adulthood across Religion in DAS and MFODS, there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Old Age across Religion in DAS and MFODS. The study was conducted on a sample of 270 participants (90 Adolescent, 90 Adulthood, 90 Old age) on an age group of 16-85 and the results was tabulated using the statistical measure of ANOVA and Pearson’s product moment correlation and the results showed that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death Anxiety across religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in DAS is accepted, null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adulthood across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Old Age across Religion in DAS and MFODS is accepted, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of Death anxiety in Adolescent across Religion in MFODS is rejected

Limitations

- The study was conducted only in Bangalore Region.
- As the concept of death anxiety is a sensitive one, the participants were not willing to talk about it.
- There has been less review of literature due to time constraint.

Implications and Suggestions

- This study can be used in the clinical setting especially for treatment planning in individuals who are suffering from anxiety related to death.
- This study can also be conducted using variables such as locus of control, Educational influence, Gender factors, terminally ill.
- This study can be conducted on a larger and wider Cultural regions.

Reference


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