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Religious Orientation and Pressure in Undergraduate Engineering Students

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been increased interest among multidisciplinary researchers in looking at the relationship between religion and health, with the bulk of the literature indicating that religion has largely positive effects on mental health (Masters, Hill, Kircher, Benson & Fallon, 2004; Pieper, 2004; Smith, McCullough & Poll, 2003). Hence this study has chosen to focus on the relationship between undergraduate students' perceptions of religious orientation, as defined by Allport and Ross (1967), and their perceptions of pressure – a form of stress identified by Weiten (1988).

Questionnaires comprising of the Religious Orientation Scale, the Pressure Inventory and demographic information in terms of age, gender and religious affiliation were administered to undergraduate engineering students at the University of the Witwatersrand to explore religious orientation and pressure respectively.

The sample consisted of 76 undergraduate engineering students at the University of the Witwatersrand. The results revealed that in this sample religious orientation had no influence on perceptions of pressure. In terms of the demographic variables, neither age nor gender was found to influence students' perceptions of religious orientation or pressure, respectively. However a significant difference was found between religious affiliation and both religious orientation and pressure. More specifically religious affiliation showed a significant difference in terms of intrinsic religious orientation, self-imposed pressure, pressure in intimate relations and total pressure.