

Religious Culture: A Moderator of the Relationship Between Religious Coping, Depression & Anxiety

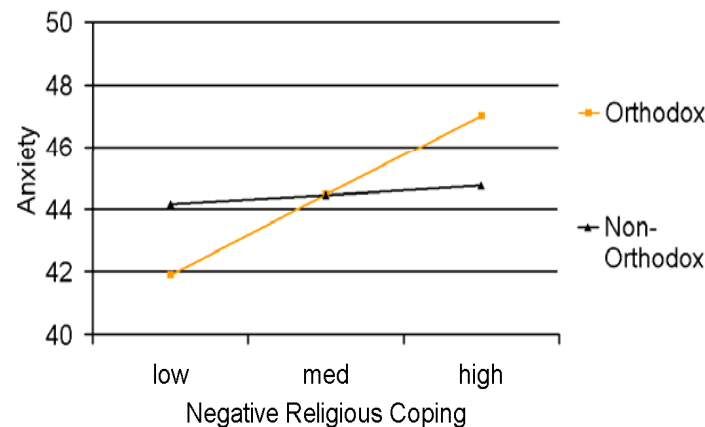
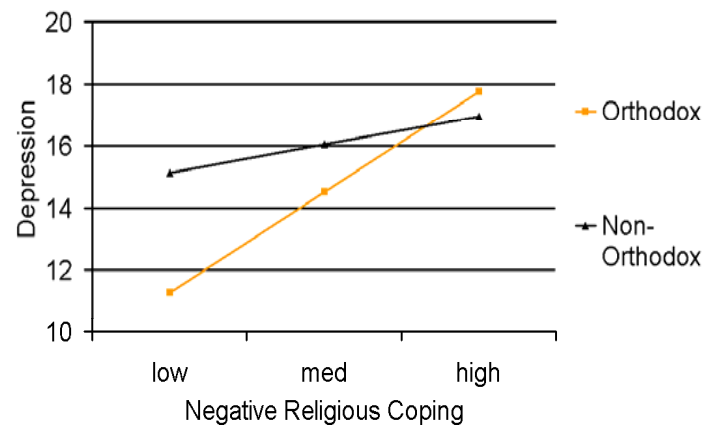
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Introduction

While previous research indicates that religious coping is a predictor of depression and anxiety, its importance may vary among religious groups. For example, Rosmarin, Pirutinsky, Pargament and Krumrei (2009) found that religious beliefs about God were tied to mental health among Orthodox Jews, but had less relevance for non-Orthodox Jews. Therefore, in this study we hypothesized that the culture of Orthodoxy would moderate the relationship between religious coping, depression and anxiety.

Participants & Procedures

141 Orthodox and 91 non-Orthodox Jews, ranging in age from 18 - 74 years ($M = 37.34$, $SD = 13.54$) and 44.9% female, completed an internet based questionnaire measuring Jewish religious coping, depression and anxiety.



Results

Positive religious coping correlated with depression and anxiety among Orthodox ($r = -.26, -.24, p < .01$), but not non-Orthodox Jews ($r = -.09, -.07, ns$). Negative coping correlated among Orthodox ($r = .33, .38, p < .01$), but not non-Orthodox Jews ($r = .12, .21, ns$). Hierarchical regression revealed a significant interaction between Orthodoxy affiliation and negative coping with regards depression ($\beta = .61, p < .01$) and anxiety ($\beta = .60, p < .01$). Positive coping and its interaction did not significantly increase variance explained.

Discussion

Religious coping was a significant predictor of anxiety and depression among Orthodox but not non-Orthodox Jews. This suggests that religious cognitions and behaviors may be important targets for intervention when engaging in treatment with Orthodox Jews. In fact, recent research suggests (Rosmarin, 2009) that reducing negative religious cognitions may lower intolerance of uncertainty and anxiety among Orthodox Jews.