Views of Suffering and Emotional Well-Being

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Add abstract
Introduction

Attempts to reconcile the suffering that takes place in the world with the existence of a morally good God have been made by philosophers and theologians over the course of history. These attempts are referred to as theodicies (Green, 2005). Theodicies are a common topic of study in the field of theology; however, little empirical research has been conducted to investigate how a person’s theodicy relates to his or her emotional well-being. Theodicies are an important topic of study because people’s worldviews play major roles in shaping their interpretation of their life experiences (Pargament, 1997). In particular, negative life events, such as serious illness, often prompt people to assess the meaning of their lives (Saunders, 1978). Negative life events are often understood as experiences of suffering in the lives of those who experience them. Thus, one’s perspective on the reasons for which suffering occurs is vital for understanding or contextualizing the negative life events that one has experienced. In order to help patients cope with life events, therapists should be familiar with various views of suffering, and they should to be able to identify resources for dealing with suffering contained in certain worldviews (Peteet, 2001).
which they should be approached in a therapeutic setting, an investigation of views of suffering and their relationship to emotional well-being has been conducted.

This project has empirically investigated the relationship between theodicies and emotional well-being. The relationship between personal theodicies, images of God, and experiences of life stress has been examined in order to expand upon the understanding of the relationship between theodicies and well-being.

Emotional well-being and stressful life events

There is a rich psychological literature documenting the negative effects of stressful life events on emotional well-being. Higher prevalence of negative life events (e.g. severe marital conflict, childhood trauma) are associated with a higher risk of developing major depressive disorder (Kasen, Chen, Sneed, & Cohen, 2010). Similarly, chronic strain, often associated with stressful life events, is correlated with depressive symptomology (Avison & Turner, 1988). Comorbidity between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and symptoms of depression and anxiety were assessed longitudinally, and researchers found that experience of traumatic events is highly related to development of depressive and anxious symptomology (Johansen, Eilertsen, Nordanger, & Weisaeth, 2013). Moreover, the traumatic events were found to have a lasting, chronic impact on mental health.
The negative effects of stressful life events are documented in numerous populations. For example, in a sample of single mothers, it was found that the experience of stressful life events is highly correlated with high levels of depression (Samuels-Dennis, 2006). In another study of African American mothers, it was found that negative life events predicted the presence of depression and anxiety (Mitchell & Ronzio, 2011). Similarly, in a study of police officers, researchers found that exposure to multiple stressful life events was highly correlated with elevated depression scores (Hartley, Violanti, Fekedulegn, Andrew, & Burchfiel, 2007). These studies demonstrate that stressful life events have negative consequences on emotional well-being.

Religiosity, stressful life events, and emotional well-being

Religiosity plays an important role in the aforementioned relationship between stressful life events and emotional well-being. There is a dense psychological literature investigating the relationship between religiosity and well-being. For example, research has explored topics relating to religious motivations (e.g. Cohen, Hall, Keonig, & Meador, 2005; Byrd, Hageman, & Isle, 2007), religious social support (e.g. Ellison & George, 1994; Krause, Ellison, Shaw, Marcum, & Boardman, 2001), and religion and negative emotions (e.g. Macavei & Miclea, 2008). Numerous studies have found a negative correlation between religiosity levels and...
depression (e.g. Miller, Warner, Wickramaratne, & Weissman, 1997; Aukst-Margetić, Jakovljević, Margetić, Bišćan, & Šamija, 2005) and anxiety (e.g. Mann, McKeown, Bacon, Vesselinov, & Bush, 2008; Abdel-Khalek, 2009). In addition, a number of studies found that a positive correlation exists between religiosity level and positive affect (Patrick & Kinney, 2003) and religiosity levels and happiness (Francis, Katz, Yablon, & Robbins, 2004).

With regards to specific life events, research has shown that religiosity/positive religious coping acts as a buffer against negative emotional well-being in the face of negative life events (Koenig, George, & Siegler, 1988). For example, Bjorck and Thurman (2007) conducted a study assessing the relationship between negative life events, religious coping, and psychological functioning. They found that negative life events were associated with increased use of both positive and negative religious coping as well as decreased psychological functioning. More importantly, they found that the use of positive religious coping in the face of negative life events buffered against the manifestation of decreased psychological functioning (e.g. depression). Another study found that, with regards to the experience of negative life events, spirituality significantly moderated the effects of depression and anxiety (Young, Cashwell, & Shcherbakova, 2000). This literature demonstrates that religion may be a protective factor against negative emotional adjustment in the face of negative life events.
Images of God and emotional well-being

As indicated by the research linking religiosity, negative life events, and emotional adjustment, one’s understanding of God/a higher power (or lack thereof) is likely to play a significant role in one’s understanding of suffering. Therefore, it is important to examine the research on perceptions of God and their relationship to emotional well-being. Belief in a benevolent, just, and supportive God is associated with more positive coping outcomes among people who had experienced serious negative life events in the past year (Pargament, Ensing, Falgout, Olsen, Reilly, et al., 1990). Stronger belief in God-mediated control is correlated with higher levels of optimism and self-worth, greater life satisfaction, and less death anxiety (Krause, 2005). A loving conception of God is correlated with lower psychological distress (Levin, 2002). In addition, a negative correlation was found between religiosity and depressive symptoms, and this correlation was stronger among participants experiencing unusually high stress due to negative life events (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003). Conceptions of God as deistic and supportive are correlated with both positive and negative mental health, but conceptions of God as abandoning are correlated with poorer mental health (Phillips, Pargament, Lynn, & Crossley, 2004). In a sample of psychiatric patients, belief in God was associated with greater reductions in depression and self-harm and with greater improvements in psychological well-being (Rosmarin, Bigda-Peyton, Kertz, Smith, & Rauch, 2013). Anger towards God is negatively correlated with
age and religiosity, and with regards to measures of past experience, atheists and agnostics tended to have negative views of God (or a hypothetical God; Exline, Park, Smith, & Carey, 2011). A study of an atheist population found that half of those classified as younger atheists had lost one or both parents before the age of twenty, and a large percentage of atheists reported being unhappy in childhood and adolescence (Vetter & Green, 1932).

Views of suffering and stressful life events

Given the relationship between conceptions of God and stressful life events, it is important to investigate the research examining perspectives on suffering and the experience of stressful life events. Positive psychological outlook is negatively associated with the development of depression, anxiety, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after the experience of a traumatic event (Linley, Joseph, & Goodfellow, 2008). A study of Taiwanese cancer patients found that positive views of suffering (e.g. regarding the suffering as a life challenge, seeking wisdom from their experience of suffering) were commonly adopted in the face of their challenge and helped them psychologically and spiritually cope with their cancer (Chio, Shih, Chiou, Lin, Hsiao, & Chen, 2008). Joseph (2009) found that stressful life events (e.g. medical problems, interpersonal experiences, natural disasters) are perceived by some as opportunities for personal growth. He discusses the idea that people are intrinsically motivated to move in a
growthful direction and to search for a fulfilling life. Importantly, he notes that positive growth after the experience of a traumatic event should not be viewed as a result of the event but as a result of the mindset of the person who experienced the event. Moreover, he emphasizes the clinical relevance of perspectives on suffering.

Current study

Although a number of studies have investigated the relationship between stressful life events, religiosity, and emotional well-being, the relationship between conceptions of God and well-being, and the impact of certain perspectives on suffering, the empirical literature on views of suffering and their relationship with emotional well-being and stressful life events is very scarce. The aim of the present study is to begin to fill this gap in the literature and offer a better understanding of the ways in which people’s views of suffering relate to psychological concepts.

One of the most important aspects of religion and its role as a buffer between stressful life events and emotional well-being is its ability to provide a mechanism by which to understand suffering and a context in which to help cope with suffering. Thus, a person’s specific view of suffering based on his or her religious (or non-religious) beliefs is likely to have important implications on his or her coping ability and thus, emotional well-being.
The goals of this study were to gain a better psychometric understanding of the newly developed Views of Suffering Scale (Hale-Smith, Park, & Edmondson, 2012), examine the relationship between views of suffering and emotional well-being, and examine the relationship between views of suffering and images of God (which will also investigate the validity of the Views of Suffering Scale).

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that views of suffering would act as moderators between stressful life events and emotional well-being. Specifically, it was hypothesized that views of suffering that allow for growth (i.e. “soul-building”) and constructive personal formation (i.e. “overcoming”) or spiritual formation (i.e. “suffering God,” “encounter”) would buffer against the experience of depression and anxiety in the presence of stressful life events. In addition, it was hypothesized that views of suffering that offer negative explanations for suffering (i.e. “retribution”) would be associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety. It was also predicted that conceptions of suffering as potentially constructive (i.e. “soul-building,” “overcoming,” “suffering God,” “encounter”) would be positively correlated with more benevolent conceptions of God. Additionally, it was predicted that overall, the VOSS would correlate with the Images of God Scale.
Method

Participants

The study consisted of 430 randomly selected students (173 males, 257 females) from the University of Notre Dame. The mean age of the sample was 19.76 (range=17-23, standard deviation=1.24). The sample was composed a fairly uniform distribution of freshman (27%), sophomores (25%), juniors (24%), and seniors (24%). Among the sample, 74% reported belief in God, 13% reported belief in a higher power of some kind, 8% was agnostic, and 5% of the sample was atheist. The sample was primarily Catholic (77%), but also included other Christians (11.5%), small percentages of Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish believers (each about 0.2%), other non-Christians (0.7%), and participants with no religious affiliation (11%).

Instruments

Views of Suffering. The Views of Suffering Scale (VOSS; Hale-Smith, Park, & Edmondson, 2012) was used to assess participants’ views of suffering. This relatively new scale was developed in order to assess people’s views of suffering based on prominent religious belief systems. Two studies within their initial scale development paper addressed the reliability and validity of the scale. In the first study, the researchers gathered a body of theodicy-related beliefs based on a variety of North American denominational religious beliefs, beliefs unassociated with any denomination, and non-theistic beliefs. Based on a large sample of responses from college
undergraduates, subscales were identified using exploratory factor analysis (see appendix for subscales and their descriptions). Items for inclusion in the second study were selected based on factor loadings greater than 0.5 and item communalities greater than 0.4. In the second study, a new sample of students was tested to assess the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the scale. Three models were tested, and Model 2 was found to have the best fit ($\chi^2(360) = 595.77, p < .001; \chi^2/df = 1.66; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .05, 90\% CI [.04, .05]; AIC = 865.76$). The final subscale scores were all within the recommended Cronbach’s alpha range of .7 to .9, indicating excellent reliability. To determine test-retest reliability, the researchers examined the correlation coefficients between time 1 and time 2 of a 14-day interval. Cronbach’s alphas were used for each subscale to determine the internal consistency, and the values were all within the recommended range of .7 to .9. The researchers also demonstrated good construct validity. It was found that belief in God was positively correlated ($r > .57, p < .001$) with all subscales that had to do with traditional beliefs in God (i.e. limited knowledge, suffering God, overcoming, providence, soul-building, encounter, divine responsibility). Belief in God was negatively correlated ($p < .001$) with Unorthodox ($r = -.23$) and Random ($r = -.25$) beliefs. The researchers also tested social desirability and found that it did not present a major concern for their scale’s validity. Overall, the researchers demonstrated good reliability and validity for their scale. Ten subscales (three items each) are used to make up the complete 30-item scale. For the scale,
participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about God and/or suffering (e.g. “individuals suffer because of their deeds in the past,” “suffering just happens without purpose or underlying reason”) on a six-point Likert scale.

**Well-being.** Psychological well-being was assessed using the short-form of the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, and Swinson (1998) examined the psychometric properties of the DASS-21, and demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach’s alphas of .94 for depression, .87 for anxiety, and .91 for stress) and good concurrent validity with the original 42-item DASS as well as other measures of similar constructs. Participants were asked to read each statement and indicate on a four-point Likert scale how much the statement applied to them over the past week. Statement examples include “I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things” and “I felt I was close to panic.” Higher scores indicated more frequent depression, stress, and anxiety symptomology.

**Image of God.** Participants’ perception of God was assessed using a 36-item short-form of the God Image Scales (GIS; Lawrence, 1997). The Coefficient Alpha Estimates of Reliability were all above .8, indicating a reliable measure. In addition, the scales were highly correlated with both intrinsic religious orientation and church attendance, indicating good validity. Participants were told to select their level of agreement (i.e. strongly agree, agree, disagree,
strongly disagree) with statements about their understanding of God. The short-form questionnaire included statements about the nature of God’s acceptance (e.g. “I know I'm not perfect, but God loves me anyway”), challenges (e.g. “God asks me to keep growing as a person”), and presence (e.g. “God is always there for me”).

**Stressful Life Events.** Life stressors were measured using a college form of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The College Adjustment Rating Scale (CARS; Zitzow, 1984) was adapted to assess college students’ stress levels within academic, social, personal, and family-home environments. Participants were given a list of life events (e.g. “death of a close friend,” “minor violations of the law”) and asked to check each event that they had experienced in the past six months or were likely to experience within the next six months. Each event was assigned a certain number of points, and each participant’s total summed score indicated his or her level of stress.

**Procedure**

Participants for the study consisted of a random sample of Notre Dame students recruited via e-mail. The students were asked if they would like to participate in a study about religiosity and psychological outcomes for a five-dollar compensation. After completing an informed consent form, participants were asked to give their age, gender, ethnicity, and other demographic information similar to the information that was asked for by Hale-Smith, Park, and Edmondson.
(2012) in their preliminary study on the VOSS. This information was assessed through multiple-choice questions about belief in God, religious affiliations, level of religious affiliation involvement, and levels of religiosity and spirituality. Then participants were given the VOSS (Hale-Smith, Park, & Edmondson, 2012), the DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), the GIS (Lawrence, 1997), the CARS (Zitzow, 1984). To prevent order effects, the order in which the scales were given to the participants was randomized. Compensation was mailed to each participant within one week of his or her completion of the survey.

Results

Preliminary data analyses

In the preliminary data analysis, a correlation matrix (see Table 1 in appendix) was constructed with the scales, subscales, and demographic information. The matrix displays a number of interesting findings. For example, each VOSS subscale was significantly correlated with each of the God Images subscales. It was predicted that conceptions of suffering as potentially constructive would be positively correlated with more benevolent conceptions of God. As predicted, divine responsibility, encounter, overcoming, suffering God, soul-building, and providence views were each positively related to perception of God as accepting, challenging, and present. Conversely, unorthodox, random, limited knowledge, and retribution were negatively related to images of God as accepting, challenging, and present. In addition, it
was hypothesized that views of suffering that offer negative explanations for suffering (i.e. “retribution”) would be associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety. As expected, a retributive view of suffering was significantly correlated with depression and anxiety. Additionally, religiosity was significantly negatively correlated with unorthodox, random, limited knowledge, and retribution views of suffering.

With regards to the VOSS, the Chronbach’s alphas indicated good internal consistency for the unorthodox ($\alpha=0.87$), random ($\alpha=0.71$), encounter ($\alpha=0.71$), limited knowledge ($\alpha=0.83$), retribution ($\alpha=0.80$), overcoming ($\alpha=0.79$), suffering God ($\alpha=0.91$), soul-building ($\alpha=0.91$), and providence ($\alpha=0.81$) subscales. The divine responsibility ($\alpha=0.57$) alpha did not fall within the preferred range of .7-.9, however, this may be a function of the small number of items in the subscale.

**Testing a priori hypotheses**

It was hypothesized that views of suffering would act as moderators between stressful life events and emotional well-being. Specifically, it was hypothesized that views of suffering that allow for growth (i.e. “soul-building”) and constructive personal formation (i.e. “overcoming”) or spiritual formation (i.e. “suffering God,” “encounter”) would buffer against the experience of depression and anxiety in the presence of stressful life events. In order to test this hypothesis, several linear regression models were fit to test the interaction of various
subscles of the VOSS and stressful life events. In zero of the eight cases was there a significant interaction between the VOSS subscales, stressful life events, and depression or stress.

As indicated by the correlation matrix, there is a strong pattern of relationship between the VOSS and the GIS. In order to provide a more definitive test of this relationship, a confirmatory factor model was fit with latent factors for VOSS and GIS. The correlations between the latent factors were examined. The relationship was statistically significant as evidenced by the Chi-square value of 0.00 ($df = 13$), the RMSEA value of 0.10 ($p = .00$), the SRMR value of 0.04, and the Comparative Fix Index value of 0.95. Table 2 (see appendix) contains the factor loading. In the table, one can see that the observed variables all loaded significantly onto the latent factors. The standard parameter estimate of .77 and the covariance of 14.24 ($p = .00$) demonstrate a strong relationship between the VOSS and the GIS.

Post-hoc analyses

As highlighted by the correlation matrix, there is a significant relationship between the stressful life events and a retribution view of suffering. This is indicates that a mediation model may be more appropriate for testing the relationship between stressful life events, views of suffering, and emotional well-being. A multiple mediator model was tested, and the retribution view of suffering was marginally significant. The path from stressful life events to retribution was significant with a parameter estimate of .004 ($p = .014$), and the path from retribution to
depression was significant with a parameter estimate of .138 ($p = .026$). The unstandardized parameter estimate of the indirect effect was .001 ($p = .098$).

**Discussion**

The results provide interesting information with regards to the relationship between views of suffering and emotional well-being. It was hypothesized that views of suffering that allow for growth and constructive personal formation or spiritual formation would buffer against the experience of depression and anxiety in the presence of stressful life events. A moderation model was used to test these relationships and there were no significant results. It was also hypothesized that views of suffering that offer negative explanations for suffering (i.e. “retribution”) would be associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety. While the initial analyses did not reveal the predicted moderation effect, post-hoc analyses revealed that a retributive perspective on suffering mediated the relationship between stressful life events and depression. Thus, there is a relationship between the constructs, but the theoretical conceptualization of the relationship needs to be slightly adjusted in future investigations. The significant relationship between the independent variable (stressful life events) and the mediator (retribution view of suffering) indicates that there is a third explanatory variable that influences the relationship between stressful life events and depression. This sheds light on the role that a retribution perspective plays in the lives of those who experience stressful life events. The
retribution perspective is the understanding of suffering as occurring because God (or higher power) actively punishes people for their wrongdoing. Thus, given its role as a mediator, people who experience negative life events and have a retribution view of suffering are likely to interpret the events as punishment from God, which likely leads to an increased risk of depression. This finding relates well to the psychological literature, and previous research offers insight into the possible mechanisms of the mediation relationship. Images of God as loving and merciful are positively correlated with self-worth, whereas conceptions of God as cruel and punishing are negatively correlated with self-worth (Francis, Gibson, & Robbins, 2001). Additionally, perceptions of God as authoritarian and punishing are correlated with aggression (Johnson, Li, Cohen, & Okun, 2013). Conceptions of God as abandoning are correlated with poorer mental health (Phillips, Pargament, Lynn, & Crossley, 2004). Each of these findings offers potential insight into the mediation relationship and these possible explanations deserve further research.

It was also predicted that conceptions of suffering as potentially constructive would be positively correlated with more benevolent conceptions of God. This hypothesis was supported by the analyses, as both the correlation matrix and the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between VOSS and GIS. This finding is coherent with the idea that one’s understanding of God’s (or a higher power’s) characteristics will inform his or
her personal understanding of the reasons for which suffering occurs in the world.

**Limitations**

A limitation of this study was that the sample was taken from a Catholic university. This may have led to an unrepresentative sample, and future research should aim to select a sample that is representative of the population in terms of religious beliefs. Another limitation of the study involved the measurement of stress. Life event checklists (such as the CARS used in this study) are limited in their ability to accurately and precisely measure the stressful nature of life events; interview-based methods are considered to be a much more effective form of stress measurement (Monroe, 2008). Because this study was limited by time constraints, a checklist measure was used. However, future research should assess life stress using an interview-based method in order to get a more thorough understanding of stressful life events.

**Future Directions**

Because research using the VOSS is fairly scarce due to the scale’s youth, future research should focus on assessing the relationships between views of suffering and other potentially related constructs. The scale’s novelty also calls for further exploration of its validity and reliability. In addition, although much research has been done regarding religiosity and its relationships with psychological constructs, most research on the relationship between well-being and religion has centered on behaviors (e.g. prayer), motivation (e.g. intrinsic religiosity),
or inner experience (e.g. transcendence), and much less research has focused on the specific beliefs themselves (Park, 2012). Preliminary research on specific religious beliefs indicates that they may be important for a number of psychological realms, including health, personality, and social, because they may inform specific attributions and influence patient coping mechanisms (Newton & McIntosh, 2009). Given the importance of beliefs for psychological realms, more belief-related research should be conducted in the future. Specifically, use of the new Views of Suffering Scale should be used to assess beliefs about the nature of suffering. Overall, this research as well as previous research demonstrates the importance of religious beliefs for psychological functioning. Thus, more research should be conducted in order to expand upon our understanding of religious beliefs and how they operate in relation to psychological functioning.
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Appendix

Subscale items in the Views of Suffering Scale from Hale-Smith, Park, & Edmondson (2012)

1. Divine Responsibility: Free Will perspectives

2. Suffering God: beliefs about God suffering with people

3. Overcoming: beliefs about overcoming suffering through prayer and/or faith

4. Encounter: beliefs about suffering as a divine encounter

5. Soul-Building: beliefs about suffering as a divinely intended personal growth experience

6. Providence: beliefs about God's control over suffering

7. Unorthodox: unorthodox theistic views

8. Limited Knowledge: Open Theistic views reflecting God's limited foreknowledge

9. Retribution: beliefs related to suffering as retribution or karma

10. Random: beliefs about suffering as being random or purposeless
Table 1. Correlation Matrix

| Views of Suffering | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. Unorthodox       | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 2. Divine Responsibility | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 3. Random           | .26 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 5. Limited Knowledge | .46 | —02 | —22 | —05 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 6. Retribution       | .38 | —05 | —07 | —06 | .28 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 7. Overcoming        | —15 | .56 | —18 | .60 | .16 | .16 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 10. Providence       | —04 | .48 | —22 | .50 | .03 | .11 | .50 | .38 | .62 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 11. College Adjustment | .14 | .05 | —03 | .03 | .08 | .12 | .01 | .03 | .04 | .08 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| Rating Scale         | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| God Image Scales     | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 13. Challenge        | —47 | .52 | —21 | .56 | —16 | —23 | .42 | .62 | .45 | .32 | —06 | .71 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 14. Presence         | —45 | .49 | —27 | .56 | —10 | —14 | .51 | .62 | .36 | —08 | .70 | .75 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 15. Stress           | .06 | .07 | .02 | .11 | —01 | .03 | .06 | .04 | .11 | .21 | —19 | —03 | —06 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 16. Depression       | .14 | .08 | .05 | .03 | .14 | .00 | —02 | .03 | .10 | .24 | —28 | —11 | —14 | .52 | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 17. Anxiety          | .19 | .03 | .00 | .03 | .14 | .18 | .01 | —06 | —04 | .05 | .20 | —24 | —12 | —10 | .51 | .57 | —  | —  | —  | —  |
| 18. Religiosity      | —39 | .49 | —19 | .55 | —13 | —17 | .48 | .57 | .36 | .36 | .03 | .48 | .59 | .62 | .05 | .00 | —06 | —  | —  | —  |
| 19. Spirituality     | —22 | .36 | —19 | .41 | —10 | —05 | .27 | .42 | .24 | .22 | .07 | .37 | .51 | .50 | .05 | .00 | .02 | .52 | —  | —  |
| 20. Belief in God    | —38 | .53 | —17 | .64 | .00 | —13 | .57 | .67 | .45 | .41 | —02 | .60 | .66 | .73 | .03 | —02 | —02 | .70 | .47 | —  |
| 21. Level of religious involvement | —36 | .42 | —15 | .54 | —15 | —17 | .43 | .55 | .31 | .30 | .06 | .45 | .54 | .56 | .06 | .01 | —08 | .78 | .51 | —61 |
| 22. Age              | .02 | —04 | .14 | —06 | —03 | .01 | —08 | —04 | —10 | —11 | —19 | .01 | —06 | —07 | .02 | —01 | .00 | —11 | .03 | .09 | —01 |
| Mean                | 5.05 | 11.12 | 10.10 | 11.28 | 5.83 | 6.89 | 9.20 | 11.58 | 11.47 | 8.76 | 183.69 | 38.67 | 38.13 | 33.30 | 7.22 | 3.84 | 2.23 | 2.60 | 2.86 | 2.00 | 5.35 | 19.76 |
| SD                  | 2.92 | 3.34 | 3.41 | 3.70 | 2.94 | 3.32 | 3.58 | 4.20 | 4.11 | 3.84 | 101.98 | 6.59 | 5.89 | 8.20 | 4.39 | 4.12 | 2.98 | 0.92 | 0.87 | 1.15 | 2.77 | 1.24 |

Note: All correlations of magnitude greater than or equal to .1 are significant at $p < .05$. 
Table 2. *Factor loading for VOSS and GIS*

| Latent Variables:                      | Estimate | Standard Error | Z-value | P(>|z|) |
|----------------------------------------|----------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Views of Suffering                     |          |                |         |         |
| Soul-Building                          | 1.00     |                |         |         |
| Encounter                              | 1.24     | 0.10           | 12.67   | .00     |
| Overcoming                             | 0.99     | 0.08           | 12.39   | .00     |
| Suffering God                          | 1.34     | 0.10           | 12.93   | .00     |
| God Image                              |          |                |         |         |
| Presence                               | 1.00     |                |         |         |
| Challenge                              | 0.72     | 0.03           | 22.89   | .00     |
| Acceptance                             | 0.72     | 0.04           | 19.76   | .00     |
| Covariance:                            | 14.24    | 1.81           | 7.86    | .00     |
| Standardized Solution:                 | .77      | 0.03           | 26.16   | .00     |