

ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of four psychological variables, namely purpose in life, self-control, satisfaction without external stimulation, and strength to stand peer pressure, in the relationship of religious involvement and adolescent substance use tendency. The four psychological variables were hypothesized to demonstrate mediating effects on religious involvement for substance use tendency. Using a sample of secondary school students in Hong Kong, the proposed framework was partially supported. Result indicated that religious involvement significantly and inversely, predicted tendency of substance use through altering their purpose in life and self-control. Although satisfaction without external stimulation had significant correlations with both religious involvement and tendency of substance use, the effects became insignificant when other psychological variables were investigated together. The relationship could only be applicable to religious believers in the present study. Religious involvement failed to be a predictor on substance use tendency among the non-religious sample. It might suggest that a combination of both internal religious commitment and behavioral measure of religious involvement was important in enhancing purpose in life and self-control, which in turn, protected adolescent from substance use. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for prevention programs.