

A social work study on measuring adherence to religious values

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the effects of demographic characteristics, including gender, marital status, level of education and age on adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan, Iran in 2014. The study has accomplished between two groups of Turk and Kurd with the population of 85,000 and 89,000, respectively. The study uses a sample of 20 and 30 people from Turkish and Kurdish tribes, respectively, and uses t-student test as well as regression analysis to examine different hypotheses of the survey. The results show that there was a meaningful difference among various variables of gender, marital status, education level and age in adherence to religious values among the youth who live in this city.

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1. Introduction

Adherence to religious believes may create moral people who are more responsible in society (Berggren, 1997; Lewis & Cruise, 2006; Mookerjee & Beron, 2005; Chuah et al., 2014). People with more religious believes tend to commit less crime and help have safer society. There are many studies on the effects of religion on people's lives. Iravani (2012a), for instance, did a survey on relationship between various elements such as mental health conditions, religion and overall perception and suicide attempt. The study covered all female and male students who attended in a private university in Iran. There were about 400 students who participated in this survey and they distributed three questionnaires among them consist of different questions. The results indicated that there were strong negative correlations between suicide attempts and students' believes in God regardless of their genders. The survey also indicated that there was not any strong positive correlation between students' mental health care and religious believes. The results of the study indicated that there was not any meaningful difference between the health care of male students and female students on suicide attempts. The study concluded that there was a strong difference between suicide attempts between female and male students.

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Iravani (2012b) investigated the impacts of various factors on juvenile delinquency. The investigation distributed 100 questionnaires among people who were involved with crime and analyzed their feedbacks. There were five hypotheses in this survey and they tried to see whether family conditions, religion, economic conditions, media and physical and psychological characteristics could play important role on juvenile delinquency in Iranian society. The results indicated that while family conditions, physical and psychological characteristics was important on juvenile delinquency, other factors did not statistically have any effect on juvenile delinquency. The study recommended that a better family condition could help reduce juvenile delinquency and people could guide their children through better consultations.

Chuah et al. (2014) studied how cross-cutting ethnic and religious identities as well as the relative strength of individual religiosity and fundamentalism influence on individual cooperation. In a repeated prisoner's dilemma experiment, information about subjects' religious and ethnic identities was either disclosed or hidden to study the individual and joint impacts of these effects on subject decisions. While subjects' knowledge of others' religious and ethnic difference had no net impact on their cooperativeness, the awareness of similarity could increase it. Subject religiosity and fundamentalism had no independent impact on cooperation, but they enhanced ethnic and religious intergroup impacts.

Hungerman (2014) implemented Canadian compulsory schooling laws to determine the relationship between completed schooling and later religiosity. The study determined that higher levels of education tend to lead to lower levels of religious affiliation later in life. Cheng and Beigi (2012) aimed to raise the awareness of research community, educators, and teachers on the interconnectedness of religion and education. First, they scanned a series of secondary-level Iranian EFL textbooks prescribed by the Iranian Ministry of Education to detect religious concepts in the form of linear and/or non-linear content. The next phase of research was devoted to the analysis of the content to detect the level of inclusiveness of the textbooks in terms of culture and religion. These textbooks were also analyzed to determine whether the propagation of religious content was overt or covert.

Javier Arias-Vazquez (2012) investigated on the relationship between education and religion in the US. The study first estimated the impact of education on religiosity based on two alternative data sources and complementary identification strategies. The study reported positive correlation between formal education and religiosity and suggested that education had a negative effect on individuals' religiosity. Brown and Taylor (2007) explored the determinants of one characteristics of religious behavior and church attendance, based on individual level data from the British National Child Development Study (NCDS), explicitly concentrating on the relationship between education and church attendance. On the contrary to the existing literature, their data helped an exploration of the dynamic dimension to religious activity since the NCDS provided information on church attendance at three stages of an individual's life cycle. They reported a positive association between education and church attendance. Besides, current participation in religious activities was positively associated with past religious behavior.

Amin and Alam (2008) investigated whether religion was an important determinant of married and single women's paid-work and full-time employment in Malaysia and reported that religion was less influential in urban areas than in rural areas. Orathinkal and Vansteenwegen (2006) investigated the relationship between religious behavior and marital satisfaction among married students of University of Tehran. They reported that the religious attitude had a more substantial relation with dyadic consensus than other three dyadic adjustment subscales. Findings also indicated not important differences between marital satisfaction and religiosity among married male and female students. Hajj and Panizza (2009) used individual-level data and a differences-in-differences estimation strategy to find out whether the education gender gap of Muslims is various from that of Christians. More specifically, they applied data for young Lebanese and explained that, other things equal, girls (both

Muslim and Christian) tend to receive more education than boys and that there was no difference between the education gender gap of Muslims and Christians.

2. The proposed study

This study aims to investigate the effects of demographic characteristics, including gender, marital status, level of education and age on adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan, Iran over the period 2014. The study has accomplished among two groups of Turk and Kurd with the population of 85,000 and 89,000, respectively. The study considers the following hypotheses,

1. There is a difference between gender and adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan.
2. There is a difference between marital status and adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan.
3. There is a difference between level of education and adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan.
4. There is a difference between age and adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan.

The study designs a questionnaire in Likert scale, Low, medium and high and consider 1, 2 and 3 for these figures, respectively. The study uses a sample of 20 and 30 people from Turkish and Kurdish tribes and uses t-student test as well as regression analysis to examine different hypotheses of the survey. Note that the implementation of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test has confirmed that all data were normally distributed.

3. The results

In this section, we present details of our findings on testing various hypotheses of the survey.

3.1. The effect of gender

The first hypothesis of this survey investigates the relationship between age and adherence to religious believes. To examine this hypothesis, the study uses Levene's test for equality of variances and t-test for equality of means. Table 1 shows the results of our survey.

Table 1

The results of Levene and t-test for measuring the effects of age on adherence to religious

	Levene's test		t-test						
	F	Sig.	t-value	df	Sig.	Mean-difference	Std. Error difference	5% Confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
$\sigma_1^2 = \sigma_2^2$	17.606	0.000	-21.671	198	0.000	-72.09	3.32655	-72.29886	-71.88114
$\sigma_1^2 \neq \sigma_2^2$			-21.671	174.434	0.000	-72.09	3.32655	-72.29890	-71.88110

According to the results of Table 1, since the sig. value is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and we assume the variances of two group are not equal we have to use the second row of t-test. In addition, the results of t-student is statistically significant. In our survey, the mean of adherence to religious believes among men and women were 1.64 and 1.73, respectively. This means

women tend to have more tendencies to religious believes than men do. This confirms the first hypothesis of the survey.

3.2. The effect of marital status

The second hypothesis of this survey investigates the relationship between marital and adherence to religious believes. To examine this hypothesis, the study applies Levene's test for equality of variances and t-test for equality of means. Table 2 presents the results of our survey.

Table 2

The results of Levene and t-test for measuring the effects of marital status on adherence to religious

	Levene's test		t-test						
	F	Sig.	t-value	df	Sig.	Mean-difference	Std. Error difference	5% Confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
$\sigma_1^2 = \sigma_2^2$	0.000	0.005	3.895	198	0.000	-72.68	3.41081	-74.89415	-74.46585
$\sigma_1^2 \neq \sigma_2^2$			3.907	156.215	0.000	-72.68	3.40889	-74.89410	-74.46590

Based on the results of Table 2, since the sig. value is greater than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and we assume the variances of two group are equal and we have to use the first row of t-test. In addition, the results of t-student is statistically significant. In our survey, the mean of adherence to religious believes among singles and married were 1.68 and 1.36, respectively. This means single people tend to have more tendencies to religious believes than married do.

3.3. The effect of education

The third hypothesis of this survey examines the relationship between educational backgrounds and adherence to religious believes. To test this hypothesis, the study uses Levene's test for equality of variances and t-test for equality of means. Table 3 presents the results of our survey.

Table 3

The results of testing the effects of educational background on adherence to religious

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	272270.2	3	0.726	1.137	0.000
Within groups	97130.977	196	0.566		
Total	369401.2	199			

According to the results of Table 3, since the sig. value is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and we assume the variances of two group are not equal. In other words, people with different educational backgrounds have various levels of religious believes.

3.4. The effect of age

The last hypothesis of this survey tries to find out whether age has any meaningful impact on adherence to religious believes or not. Table 4 demonstrates the results of the survey.

Table 4

The results of one-way ANOVA test for learning the effect of age on adherence to religious

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	57184.835	3	28592.418	6.041	0.000
Within groups	312216.3	196	1584.854		
Total	369401.2	199			

According to the results of Table 3, since the sig. value is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and we assume the variances of two group are not equal. In other words, people at different ages have various levels of religious believes.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Adherence to religious believes may create moral people who are more responsible in society. It is always important to learn more about the effects of various factors on adherence on religious believes. In this paper, we have performed an investigation to study the effects of demographic characteristics, including gender, marital status, level of education and age on adherence to religious values among young people in city of Shahin Dezh and Takab, located in province of West Azerbaijan, Iran over the period 2014. According to our results, the mean of adherence to religious believes among men and women were 1.64 and 1.73, respectively. This means women tend to have more tendencies to religious believes than men do. This confirms the first hypothesis of the survey. In addition, the mean of adherence to religious believes among singles and married were 1.68 and 1.36, respectively. This means single people tend to have more tendencies to religious believes than married do. Moreover, people with different educational backgrounds have various levels of religious believes. Finally, people at different ages have various levels of religious believes. The results of this study are somehow consistent with earlier results (Mersland et al., 2013; Mookerjee & Beron, 2005; Brown & Taylor, 2007).

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