

studying social factors affecting religious beliefs of students

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Abstract

The present research aims to study social factors affecting religious beliefs of female students (field of study: educational science) of Farhangian University who were accepted in entrance exam in 2015. This is an applied research and its methodology is descriptive- analytic. Field information was gathered and the questionnaire was the research instrument. Statistical population was female students of Farhangian University in 2015. Sampling was done randomly and 50 students were randomly chosen among students accepted in 2015 based on Morgan table. Social variables studied in this research were family, peers, professors and teachers, media and advertisements and cultural variables were congregational pray and religious sessions, Eid ceremonies, camping and trip. Scoring was done based on Likert method. Results suggest that there is a significant relationship between religious beliefs, opinions of families and peers, professors and teachers, media, advertisement and cultural activity (congregational pray, religious meetings, camping and entertainment and Eids) and religious beliefs of student

Keywords: religious beliefs, family, friends and peers, media and advertisement, cultural activities

Introduction

Religion means the style of life. Religion is a fact that has a considerable presence in life aspects and dimensions and it has woven in human's life. Human history started with divine direction and human being was never deprived from it. In each age, divine prophets announced God's message and the prophet, Muhammad, brought about the most complete religion for human beings and Islam became the religion of all humans and ages. Religion is a requirement originated from human nature. This need originates from inside of human being and according to Fram, this need is required in direction of belief and faith and everybody requires this need. Individually human being

feels secure and comfortable in light of belief in God and application of religious rules. This reality has been confirmed by psychologists. Religion is psychologically complex and includes a set of psychological categories such as emotions, beliefs, values, behaviors and environment. In another definition, Talkot Parsons defined it as a set of religious beliefs, acts, poems, and institutions made by different societies. Herbert Spenser believes that religion is confession of this reality that all creatures are imaginary forces that are beyond our science and knowledge. James- Prat believe that religion is recognition, emotion or behavior that is made based on perceived information or interaction with transcendent essence and it is assumed to play important role in human's affairs. According to Heak, religion is a response to divine call. Kant stated that religion is the rule governed on our entity and its dominance is originated from legislator and judgment. Generally, religion is a set of beliefs, feelings, acts, and experiences people face in loneliness and it is a divine thing (quoted by Sarmadi, 2006:60). Religion enhances the relationship between social members and social requirements that help their unity because values that are fundamental in social requirement are common among religious groups (Lahsaei Zadeh, Jahangiri, Sharifi, 2004:3). The aim of religious negotiations is not to create belief in God in human being rather the main aim is to pay attention deeply to God and religion and to create a deep religious insight in human societies (Honarvar, 2001:105). It seems that involvement of children in religious affairs can lead to social unity in future. Our society is a religious one and youths will be its actors in future. The present research aims to study socio-cultural factors affecting religious beliefs. For this purpose, the role of family, professors and teachers, peers, media, cultural activities (congregational pray and religious sessions, camping, trip and Eids) on religious beliefs is studied.

Research importance and necessity

Religion always has been one of important challenges for human beings and its requirement is felt by everybody. At the moment, human being has reached a place where the necessity of tendency to religion and knowledge resulted from piousness is felt and it searches for a shelter to become free from stress. Therefore, it is necessary to plan and design modern methods to deliver religious teachings to today human being (Keshavarz, Shah Nazari, Kalantari, 2009:2). Among those who referred to importance of religious studies is Rush, the father of psychiatry in America, and he stated that religion is very important for growth of mental health like the air for respiration (Shahbazi quoted from Keshavarz, Shah Nazari, Kalantari, 2009:2). In fact, religion and piousness are realities that construct human life's base. It can be concluded that religion is one of the main bases in culture of each nation, gives the society identity, and brings about the feeling of solidarity among people. Among values and beliefs that play important role in formation of life style are religious values and beliefs. Belief in religious values has several effects such as increase of self confidence, effect on mind of pious people, removing feeling of loneliness, reaching the real meaning of life, expectancy and so on. There are verses in Quran that confirm abovementioned such as verse 24 of Al-Anfal (the spoils of War), verse 16 of Qaf, verse 4 of Al-Fath (the victory), verse 85 of Al-Waqi'ah, verse 186 of Al-Bagharah (the Cow) (Nazarnezhad, Sharaf Tadvani, 2010: 52-54). Here, according to verse 16, the Cow, "in fact, we created human being and we know that its ego tempts him and we are close human more than its vessel." Therefore, it is necessary to disperse correct theoretic basics of Islamic education for directing to religious education. Therefore pious and moral people are grown and a healthy society is brought about (Mosavi Moghadam, 2002:204).

Research background

Lahsaeizadeh and Jahangiri (2004) studied socio-economical factors affecting commitment to religious values on students in Shiraz high schools (case study) and concluded that the more complete the religious factors accepted by parents, friends, school and religious teachers, the students are more committed to religious values. If users of media devices (books, newspaper, radio and television) follows religious subject more than other things, they will be more committed to religious values. Mohebi and Karimi Khoygani (2013) studied social factors affecting religious education of students of disciplinary science university and concluded that variables of family, friend and communications are effective on religious education but friends are the most effective variable and the effect of variables of cultural institutions, religious activities and media are not significant on religious education (P: 13). Mohammadi and Abbasian (2010) studied factors affecting promotion of spirituality of cadets in university of Imam Ali. In this research, factors affecting promotion of spirituality, variables of behavior of political staff, relationship with clergyman, holding Quran classes, participation in congregational pray were studied. They concluded that programs and behavior of political staff, regular relationship between students and clergymen, extracurricular classes (Quran, Nahjolbalagheh), participation in congregational pray are effective on promotion of spirituality in cadets of University of Imam Ali (P. 31). Moafi and Ashrafi (2013) studied factors affecting religion acceptance and disbelief from views of young people and concluded that type of family education, relation with friends and peers are effective on religion acceptance and disbelief of youths. Relationship with friends and peers is very effective and attractive among youths because friends are the most important companions and human being is affected by thoughts and moral characters of friends. Also, media are effective on religion acceptance and disbelief. Today and in age of communications, the media world has entered to modern technology era because media play important role on rapid implementation of programs and goals (P 15). Kalaki (2006) studied the relationship between amount of using religious programs of the media and amount of religious belonging of youth and concluded that young people have high religious information and tendency but they are reluctant to use religious programs of the media (P. 23). Bakhtiari and Farrokhi (2011) studied the relation between programs of satellite networks and religious identity of youths and concluded that satellite networks are effective on religious identity of youths. Results of statistical test showed that the relation between these two variables is significant and satellite networks are negatively effective on religious identity of youths. According to research results, the aim of satellite networks is mostly to encourage young people to listen to western music, to weaken religious beliefs, to imitate western life style and socio-cultural system, to refuse religion, to leave pray and other religious obligations, not to read Quran and pray, to increase behavioral abnormalities in family and not to respect parents (P: 17). Abbaszadeh and Kharatian Khameneh, Abbasi and Mobarak Bakhshayesh (2010) studied factors affecting religious tendency of students and presented proper strategies. Then they concluded that the higher the level of mother's education, religious tendency of students is decreased and vice versa. Families are effective on religious tendency of their children in childhood, adolescence, and youth periods. It means that if parents are religious and encourage their children to praying and fasting and participate in religious ceremonies with their children, they will be effective on religious tendency of children and vice versa. They also concluded that there is a relationship between performances of trustees of religious affairs, teachers and professors and amount of religious beliefs. If they are honest in their work and meet requirements of young generation by accurate scrutiny in religious affairs, the young people will place in direction of religious tendency and if they do not behave as religious people, they will not only lose their place among youths but

also they will affect negatively youths' religious beliefs (P: 65). Heidari and Shamli (quoted by Yadegari and Behrouzi, 2012) studied the effect of education of religion lesson on religious beliefs of students and concluded that in addition to good behavior of the professor, his commitment to customs , traditions, beliefs and performance of religious practices are the most important moral behaviors of professors and they are effective on youths. Much of social impairment in students can be reduced by reinforcing religious beliefs. If religious education is based on correct religious beliefs, basics and teachings of Islamic religion will be institutionalized in individual conscience. Therefore, the relation between professor and student is effective on reinforcement of religious beliefs. It is better to pay special attention to growth of moral, pious and pleases teachers in addition to other factors. Psychological characteristics of youth period should be especially paid attention while holding the classes. Navidnia and Abedini (2011) studied factors affecting religious commitment of youths in students of pre-university schools of Garmsar city and concluded that there is no significant relation between parents' job and religious commitment of youths but there is a significant difference between amounts of piousness of children in families with different incomes. It means that children in low income families are more committed to religion than those in high income families. Another result of the research was that the higher the socio-economical place of youths, the lower their piousness. In other words, research findings show that there is an inverse relation between socio-economical place and religiousness of youths. Still another result was that there is a relation between religious centers and religious commitment of individuals meaning that the higher the connection of individuals with religious centers (such as mosques and religious groups), the higher the religious commitment of individuals (P:67).

Problem statement

Human being has been curious about religious affairs during history. Recent researches show that religion is the oldest and the most important event faced by human being (Honarvar, 2005). Religion is a global event that distinguishes animals from human being. Religion is one of the most powerful factors affecting the life and it can be said that religion is the striking feature within human history. Incorrect knowledge from divine descriptions is a problem in human life. Incorrect interpretation from the power and effect of religious affairs on life may cause human being to become pessimistic towards divine and religious affairs when facing problems and difficulties that seem unsolvable and it weakens religious beliefs whereas correct belief in religion can have positive effect on social and personal life of human being. Religion is very important for everybody more than other things. It is obvious that finding the origin of weakness of faith in present age and removing it are effective on deepening religious insights in the society (Honarvar, 2001: 105-106). it should be noted that several factors and causes have been effective on emergence of this event among which factors such as effect of family, peers, media, advertisement and cultural activities (congregational pray, religious sessions, camps, invitation of lecturers, religious ceremonies and Eids) on amount of religious beliefs are studied.

Objectives

The general goal is to study amount of religious beliefs of youths (case study: female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University)

Minor goals

- 1- Studying the role of family, peers and professors on religious beliefs of students
- 2- Studying the effect of media and advertisement on religious beliefs of students
- 3- Studying the effect of cultural on religious beliefs of students

Hypotheses

- 1- There is a significant relationship between family, peers, professors and teachers and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University
- 2- There is a significant relationship between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University
- 3- There is a significant relationship between cultural activities and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University

Research methodology

This is a descriptive-analytic research and information was gathered using questionnaire. This scale was prepared by Khodayari Fard and Ghobari Banab and includes 37 items about worships, ethics, values, effect of religion on life and human behavior, social issues, world view, beliefs, and religion. They were scored by Likert scale (never, low, average, high, very high). For scoring the scale, the scores of 1 and 5 were given to choices with positive attitude, scores of 1 and 2 were given to choices with negative attitude, and score of 3 was given to in-between choices. The highest score was 200 in this scale. Correlation coefficient of each subject and total score of the questionnaire are valid in 0.0001 level and Bud reliability and Spearman Brown method were – 0.93 and 0.92 respectively. Cronbach coefficient is 0.95 as well. Sharifi obtained the reliability of this questionnaire based on Tasnif method (0.88) and Cronbach method (0.93). In present research, Cronbach and Tasnif methods were used to determine reliability of the questionnaire and they were 0.9 and 0.96 respectively suggesting optimal reliability of religious attitude questionnaire. Data were gathered by the software and statistical activities related to analysis of research findings.

Analysis

In this section, research data are analyzed. Data are represented in tables and charts. The best way for setting structure of this chapter is to present findings regarding to research hypotheses. Concerning the nature of research hypotheses, inferential and descriptive statistics are used that were predicted previously. Since research hypotheses have a reasonable arrangement, findings should be presented in a reasonable arrangement as well. This rational order should be considered in tables and charts (Sarmad, Bazargan and Hejazi, P: 323-324). In order to do researches on behavioral sciences especially in surveying researches that are based on obtaining information from the research subject, information analysis is very important. It is in this stage that the researcher tests the hypotheses and answers his/her questions. Effectiveness and efficiency of a research is based on information analysis, test of research hypotheses and questions. Concerning the research title, studying socio-cultural factors affecting religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University in 2015, tables of frequency distribution, percentage and column chart have been used to show figures of demographic features such as academic group and entrance year. Also, Pearson correlation has been used in direction of inferential analysis and test of research hypotheses via SPSS 16.

1-4 descriptive statistics

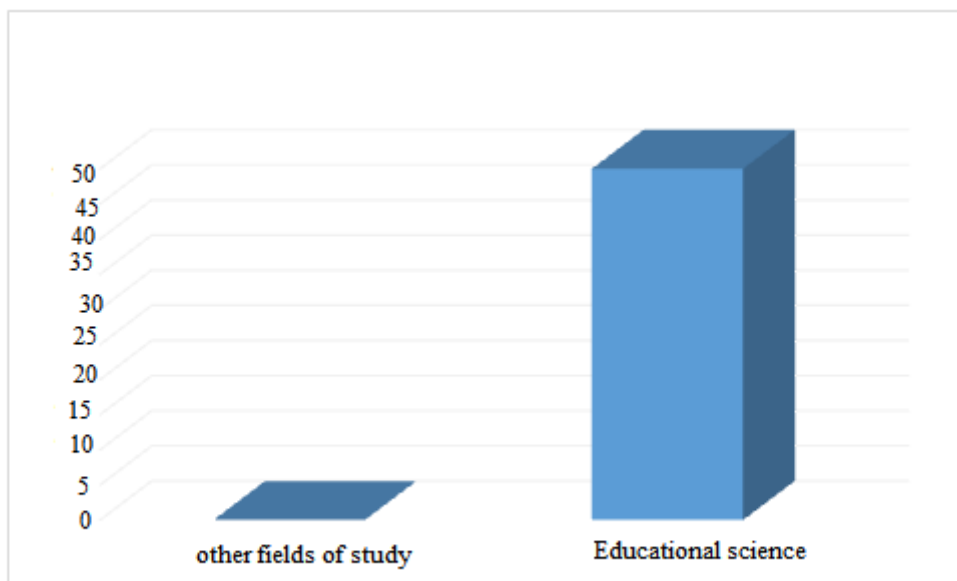
Studying the amount of sample based on entrance year

Table 1-4: the amount of sample based on entrance year

	Educational science	Other fields of study
Number of students	50	0
Total number	50	0

Concerning above table, field of study of all students is educational science

Chart 4-2: amount of the sample based on field of study



Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between family, peers, professors and teachers and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University

Variable	Religious beliefs			
Test	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result	Number of sample
Family and peers	0.03	0.01	Presence of relationship	50

As seen in above table, the correlation coefficient between family, peers, professors and teachers and religious beliefs of students is 0.03 and there is a positive and significant relation in significance level of 0.01. Therefore, it can be said surely (99%) that there is a significant relation between these two variables and the hypothesis is confirmed. It is concluded that religious beliefs of family, peers, professors, and teachers are effective on religious beliefs of students

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University

Table 4-4: correlation between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of students

Variable	Religious beliefs			
Test	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result	Number of sample
Media and advertisement	0.44	0.005	Presence of relationship	50

As seen in above table, the correlation coefficient between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of students is 0.44 and there is a positive and significant relation in significance level of - 0.01. Therefore, it can be said surely (99%) that there is a significant relation between these two variables and the hypothesis is confirmed. It is concluded that media and advertisement are effective on religious beliefs of students

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between group activities (congregational pray, religious sessions, camping, ceremonies, Eids) and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University

Table 4-5: correlation between group activities and religious beliefs of students

Variable	Religious beliefs			
Test	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result	Number of sample
Cultural activities	0.39	0.023	Presence of relationship	50

As seen in above table, the correlation coefficient between cultural activities and religious beliefs of students is 0.39 and there is a positive and significant relation in significance level of - 0.05. Therefore, it can be said surely (95%) that there is a significant relation between these two variables and the hypothesis is confirmed. It is concluded that cultural activities are effective on religious beliefs of students.

Results and discussion

Results of data analysis about the significant relationship between family, peers, professors and teachers and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science of Farhangian University show the significant and positive relationship between family, peer, professors and teachers and religious beliefs of students. It should be said that place of family and professors, lack of attention of parents to religious education of daughters especially in childhood and adolescence play important role in disbelief of youths. If child is grown in an environment where family members are reluctant and irresponsible for religious issues, undoubtedly the child will escape from religion and pray when he/she is young or old. Parents should start correct and religious education of their children from childhood and they should guide their children well in adolescence and young ages because when children are grown, their personality will form completely and it is difficult to change it. Also, one of features of young age is imitation. The young person seeks an individual to imitate his/her behaviors. When a teenager is interested in scientific, artistic and sport place of an individual, then he/ she tries to coordinate his/her cloths, sitting and standing, walking and speaking with that individual. Results of the hypothesis agree with those of "studying the factors affecting religious tendency of students and presenting suitable strategies." This research

was done by Abbaszadeh and Kharatian Khameneh, Abbasi and Mobarak Bakhshayesh in 2010. Results of this research show that 61% of family education is effective on accepting religion and disbelief of young people. On average, 51% of the relationship with friends and peers is effective on accepting religion and disbelief of young people. Relationship with friends and peers is very effective and attractive for young people because the most important companion is friend and human being is affected unconsciously by moral characters and thoughts of friends. Results of data analysis about the significant relationship between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University show significant and positive relationship between media & advertisement and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University. Today, media plays important role in formation of individual personality and culture because most of people especially youths spend a lot of time for reading magazine and newspaper or watching television and going to cinema. Therefore, performance of these media devices is very effective on reflection of beliefs and values accepted by people in the society, acceptance, or refusal of these things. Imam Khomeini ordered radio & television staff as follows:

Radio or television system should be informative. They should make our youths powerful. They can be educated well by watching and listening because everybody listens to them and the youth listens too. In programs in which material values, wealth, inequality, jobbery, and luxuriance are introduced as positive values and spiritual and religious values are subordinate of material values, how can we expect teenagers and youths to commit religious beliefs and values? Therefore, media owners should never act based on their personal desires rather they should direct the society into salvation and healthy road.

Imam Khomeini stated about the mission of the media:

These systems are educational. All people in the society should be educated by these systems. They are public universities that are extended throughout the country. Results of this hypothesis disagree with those of “the relationship between using religious programs of the media and religious belonging of youths.” The research was conducted by Kalaki in 2006. He concluded that youths have high religious information and tendency but they are reluctant to use religious programs of the media. Results of data analysis of the significant relationship between cultural activities (congregational pray, religious sessions, camping, trip, ceremonies and Eids) and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University show significant and positive relationship between cultural activities and religious beliefs of female students in field of educational science in Farhangian University. Mosques and activities performed in them provide a ground for mental and social education of youth by making a relationship between pious religious people and elites and good people in the society. In Islamic school and other educational schools, isolation is a kind of mental disease while collectivism is a sign of mental health and intellectual balance. Results of this hypothesis agree with those of “studying the factors affecting promotion of cadets’ spirituality in university of Imam Ali.” This research was conducted by Mohammadi and Abbasian in 2010. One of results of this research is that regular relationship between clergymen and students, extracurricular classes (Quran and Nahjolbalagheh), participation in congregational pray is effective on promotion of cadets’ spirituality in university of Imam Ali.

Suggestions

- 1- Conducting the research on a more extensive statistical population

- 2- Paying more attention to religious education and formulating different books and dissertations in this regard concerning its importance
- 3- Studying the relationship between religious beliefs and mental health of students
- 4- Researchers can test the relationship between personal differences and religious belief
- 5- Concerning the importance of religion in education, life, and future of students, it is suggested that experts and authorities pay more attention to this issue in order to increase social health and abilities of students.
- 6- Holding religious ceremonies in university such as congregational pray, mourning, celebrations, and Eids, holding meetings for recognizing religious and mystic issues can be effective on religious attitudes of students.

Research limitations

- 1- Restriction of statistical population to students who were accepted in 2015 at Farhangian University
- 2- Small amount of statistical sample
- 3- Time restriction in completion of the project

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