Nature of Religious Commitment

Among the Muslim Youth

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Abstract

By applying Glock's multidimensional concept of religiosity, the study aims to explore the nature of religious commitment among youth by conducting a quantitative study among 254 Muslim students from different departments of Social Sciences faculty and also Science and Engineering faculty at University of Barishal, Bangladesh. The findings of the study show that majority of the respondents who belong to young generation are strong at their ideological and experiential dimension of religiosity. But in ritualistic and consequential dimension their position is not significant at all. They are more believer than a performer. Besides their exposure in the intellectual dimension of religiosity is in moderate level.

Keywords: Religiosity, Religious commitment, Muslim youth

1. Introduction

As the meaning of religion differs from man to man, and even within the same religious doctrine, in the same way the importance of religion in individual's life also varies from one person to another person depending on their age, sex, mind set up and social, economic and cultural contexts**.** How much religious are we in the era of globalization? Is the importance of religion increasing or decreasing in our life? The study attempts to know the nature of religious commitment among the students of University of Barishal. Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country. Each and every religion has some religious beliefs, practices, symbols and

holy scriptures. When people follow certain religious beliefs and rituals, sometimes, they are regarded as religious in a general sense. But measuring religiosity is very difficult as the term religiosity involves a variety of meanings and multiple aspects. Being religious in one aspect does not lead to pietism in all other aspects (Hassan, 2005). Being a true believer, how will be the manifestations of religiosity of a Muslim is a debatable issue as it operates at multidimensional levels. People who follow obligatory Muslim rituals, sometimes, derogate and doubt about their fellow Muslim's religiosity (Hassan, 2005). Many people think that, people's religious commitment can best be realized by noticing their behavior not only in the religious aspects but also in all other aspects of life (Hassan, 2005).

The study is mainly followed with the Tawhidiq Islamic Worldview of the Islamic faith. This Tawhidiq paradigm basically holds the belief of oneness of God. In this view Quran (holy scripture of Islam) and Sunnah (the way of life prescribed by Prophet Muhammad) are the primary source of Islamic law beliefs, and practices. The Tawhidiq Worldview of Islam is a metaphysical one that puts God at the center, and upholds Him as the ultimate reality, making return to Him the inevitable result for everything in creation (cited by Krauss, Hamzah, Suandi…and Mahmood, 2006).

Belief in the six articles of faith is the basis of Islam which are belief in the existence and oneness of God (Allah); belief in the existence of angels; belief in the existence of the scriptures; belief in the existence of all prophets and Muhammad being the last of them; belief in the existence of the Day of Judgement; belief in the existence of God's predestination whether it involves good or bad. The heart of faith for all Muslims is obedience to Allah. Next to the faith is the practices. The most important Muslim practices are described as the Five Pillars of Islam. The Five pillars consist of: Shahadah (belief in the oneness of Allah); Salat (performing prayers five times each a day); Zakat (paying an alms tax); Sawm (fasting during the month of Ramadan); Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). These practices are the most important rituals of Islam which put faith into action to show religious devotion. Besides Islam contains many rules for daily lives. As example a Muslim must greet another Muslim with Salam; a Muslim must start any work with reciting Bismillah; respecting parents as a compulsory duty etc. Islam tells Muslims not to attack others' beliefs or engage in conflicts about matters of others' religion. Islam prohibits Muslims from consuming pork, alcohol or mind-altering drugs; gambling; taking interest; lying; stealing; engaging sex outside of marriage etc.

The present study used Stark and Glock's five-dimensional model of religiosity, which they termed as the experiential, the ritualistic, the ideological, the intellectual, and the consequential dimensions, as a conceptual framework for assessing the manifestation of religious commitment among the Muslim students of the University of Barishal. These dimensions found to be applicable by many scholars (Faulkner and Dejong, 1966; Clayton, 1968; Lehman and Shriver, 1968; Kuhre, 1971; Davidson, 1975; Weigert and Thomas, 1974; Clayton and Gladden, 1974; Dejong, Faulkner and Warland, 1976; and Hassan, 2005). The objectives of the study are:

- To know the ideological religiosity of youth.
- To know the experiential religiosity of youth.

- To know the ritualistic religiosity of youth.
- To know the consequential religiosity of youth.
- To know the intellectual religiosity of youth.

2. Five-dimensional Model of Religiosity and the Piety of Muslim

Religious beliefs, rituals and manifestations of pietism differ from one religion to another. In spite of variations in religious manifestations, Stark and Glock (1968) proposes a five-dimensional framework to capture the nature of religious commitment labeling them as the ideological, the ritualistic, the experiential, the intellectual and the consequential religiosity where consecutively reflected different expressions of pietism ordained by different world religions.

2.1 The Ideological Religiosity

Accepting or adhering to a fundamental set of religious beliefs of a specific religion concerning the nature, supernatural world as well as the values applied to the everyday life is the ideological religiosity (Glock, 1969), which is the basis of all religions. To determine the nature of ideological dimensions among youth, the following most commonly held religious beliefs of Islam were selected: Belief in the existence of Allah; belief in holy and sin; belief in sin for not following the religious rules and regulations; belief that Quran is the words of Allah; belief in the Qur'anic miracles; belief in the existence of Jinn and angels; belief in the existence of devil; belief in the existence of heaven and hell; believing in the existence of Hurs and Golemans; belief in after life and believing in keyamot.

2.2 The Ritualistic Religiosity

The ritualistic religiosity involves the performance or execution of certain religious practices that enable individuals to be close to the sacred and strengthen their beliefs (Glock, 1969) and give religions a social character in real (Sinha, 1974). For Glock and Stark, "through rituals religions reinforce commitment to their systems of beliefs about the nature and intentions of the supernatural" (Glock, 1969: 8). The following basic rituals of Islam and its frequency were chosen to determine the strength of ritualistic religiosity among youth: execution of prayers and its frequency; reciting the Holy Quran daily; observation of fasting in the whole month of Ramadan; and celebration of special religious rituals.

2.3 The Experiential Religiosity

Experiential religiosity represents the emotional affiliation of an individual to a specific religion which raise when individuals are able to develop an affective relationship with the supernatural being (Sinha, 1974) and that arouse feelings of security, comfort, peace in mind as well as feeling of awe, mystery, humbleness and ecstasy. According to Glock and Stark, "Religious experiences are all of those feelings, perceptions, and sensations which are experienced by an actor or defined by a religious group or a society as involving some communication with transcendental authority" (1969:42). "Experiences of this character can be described as confirming, responsive, salvational, sanctioning and temptational respectively" (Stark & Glock, 1968, cited by Hassan, 2005).

Experiential religiosity is measured by using the following criterion: a feeling of the presence of Allah; a feeling of being gone to heaven for leading life honestly; a feeling of being gone to hell for leading life dishonestly; a wish to go to the pilgrimage to Mecca; a sense of being

accountable to God; a sense of being rewarded by Allah; a sense of being saved if pray to Allah; a sense of successful end when starting anything in the name of Allah; a sense of being afraid of Allah; a feeling of guilty for not following the religious obligations; a sense of being afraid of not observing fasting in the month of Ramadan; a sense of being afraid of not praying to Allah every day; a sense of fear for being present in Hasorer Maidan (the day of final judgement); a feeling of being punished by Allah while doing something wrong; a feeling of being provoked by the Devil to do wrong activity or not to do right one; a feeling of being tempted by the Hurs/Goleman for doing right things; reaction of criticism against religious belief; and conversion for the sake of love.

2.4 The Consequential Religiosity

The consequential religiosity refers to the comprehensive effects of the religious belief, ritual, experience and knowledge on believers' perceptions, attitudes and daily behavior (Glock, 1972). The observance of Islamic law to govern the daily life is not an outcome of religious commitment but a worship in itself (El-Menouar, 2014) as Islam is called the complete code of life.

To determine the effects of religion on individual's life, the following questions were selected: do you take helps from the Holy Quran for making everyday decisions?; giving Salam to a Muslim is Sunnah, do you follow it always?; do you start anything in the name of Allah?; do you smoke or have ever smoke or drink alcohol?; have you ever eaten haram meat?; do you avoid any kind of companionship with the opposite sex?; do you listen to music?; do you watch television?; do you watch movie?; do you take photo of you?; and is there any animal picture in your room?.

2.5 The Intellectual Religiosity

The intellectual dimension refers to an individual's basic knowledge about the history, holy scriptures and basic pillars of a particular religious doctrine (Glock, 1962). It is extremely difficult to decide which religious contents are the basic within Islam that every Muslim should know.

The following basic tenets, history and holy scriptures about Islam were identified and formulated as questions in order to assess the intellectual religiosity among youth and it is expected that they have some knowledge about these aspects: who were the first and last prophets of Islam?; what are the basic pillars of Islam?; where is Kaba sharif located?;what is the Holy place of Islam?; how many heavens and hells are there according to Islam?; when was the Prophet Muhammad born?; where the Holy Quran was first appeared?; which surah of the Holy Qur'an was first appeared?; how many Paras and Surahs are there in the Holy Quran? how many Shijdahs are there in the Holy Quran?; what is the meaning of the word "Namaz (Salat)"?; how much gold and silver will lead to Zakat?; how many Kolemas are there?; according to Islam, with whom you cannot be involved in marital relationships?; what is the difference between the Holy Quran and Hadith?; and how many Asmani Kitabs (scriptures) are there?.

3. Methodology

The study is a quantitative one which is carried out by using survey method. By using Cochran's formula, the desired sample size is determined and a total of 254 students are

selected as respondents through systematic sampling from two faculties (Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Science and Engineering) of the University of Barishal. The data are collected using self-administered questionnaire.

3.1 Participants

The following table represents the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age, faculty and department. A total of 254 respondents are selected from two faculties of the University of Barishal, of whom 55.9 percent of the respondents are from the Faculty of Social Sciences and 44.1 percent are from the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Of the 55.9 percent respondents from Social Science faculty, 13.8 percent and 16.1 percent of the respondents are from Sociology and Economics departments respectively. The percentages of the respondents from Political Science and Public Administration departments are the same which is 13 percent each. On the other hand, of the 44.1 percent respondents from Science and Engineering faculty, 17.3 percent of the respondents are from Mathematics department, while 9.8 percent, 7.9 percent and 9.1 percent of the respondents are from Physics, Geology and Mining and Computer Science departments respectively. Participants consists of 64.6 percent male and 35.4 percent female and their ages range from 20-24 years. The majority of the respondents' (46.9 percent) age is 22 years, whereas 29.9 percent of the respondents is 21 years of old.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Demography	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	164	64.6
	Female	90	35.4
Age	20 Years	17	6.7
	21 Years	76	29.9
	22 Years	119	46.9
	23 Years	37	14.6
	24 Years	5	2.0
Faculty	Social Science	142	55.9
	Science and Engineering	112	44.1
Department	Sociology	35	13.8
	Economics	41	16.1
	Political Science	33	13.0
	Public Administration	33	13.0
	Mathematics	44	17.3
	Physics	25	9.8
	Geology and Mining	20	7.9
	Computer Science	23	9.1

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254.

4. Nature of Religious Commitment

4.1 Ideological Religiosity

Table 2 shows that a great majority of the respondents' ideological religiosity is very strong. 98.8 percent of the respondents believe in the existence of Allah, 98.4 percent of the respondents believe that Quran is the words of Allah, 98 percent of the respondents believe in holy and sin and 97.6 percent of the respondents believe in Keyamot. Ninety seven percent of the respondents believe in in the existence of Jinn and angels, heaven and hell and after life, whereas 95.3 percent and 94.5 percent of the respondents believe in the existence of Hurs and Golemans and devil respectively. On the other hand, 96.9 percent of the respondents believe in the Qur'anic miracles and 96.5 percent believe in sin for not following the religious rules and regulations.

Table 2. Ideological religiosity of the respondents

Ideological religiosity	Frequency	Percentage
Believing in the existence of Allah	251	98.8
Believing in holy and sin	249	98.0
Believing in sin for not following the religious rules and regulations	245	96.5
Believing that Quran is the words of Allah	250	98.4
Believing in the Qur'anic miracles	246	96.9
Believing in the existence of Jinn and angels	247	97.2
Believing in the existence of devil	240	94.5
Believing in the existence of heaven and hell	247	97.2
Believing in the existence of Hurs and Golemans	242	95.3
Believing in after life	247	97.2
Believing in Keyamot	248	97.6

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254.

4.2 Experiential Religiosity

The following table shows that the nature of experiential religiosity among youth is very strong with a majority (97.6 percent) of the respondents feel the presence of Allah and 97.2 percent have a sense of being afraid of Allah and a wish to go to the pilgrimage to Mecca. 96.1 percent of the respondents have a sense of being accountable to Allah, while 95.7 percent of the respondents has ever felt a sense of being rewarded by Allah and 95.3 percent have a feeling of being gone to heaven for leading life honestly. On the other hand, 94.9 percent of the respondents feel guilty if they do not follow the religious obligations and have a sense of being saved if they pray to Allah, 94.5 percent of the respondents feel frightened for being present in Hasorer Maidan while 94.1 percent feel scared for not observing fasting

during Ramadan. Almost 94 percent of the respondents are afraid of Allah for not praying every day and feel that they will be successful if starting anything in the name of God and will go to the hell for leading life dishonestly.

Table 3. Experiential religiosity of the respondent

Experiential religiosity	Frequency	Percentage
Feeling the presence of Allah	248	97.6
Feeling of being gone to heaven for leading life honestly	242	95.3
Feeling of being gone to hell for leading life dishonestly	238	93.7
Wish to go to the pilgrimage to Mecca	247	97.2
Having a sense of being accountable to Allah	244	96.1
Ever felt a sense of being rewarded by Allah	243	95.7
Having a sense of being saved if pray to Allah	241	94.9
Having a sense of successful end when starting anything in the name of Allah	238	93.7
Having a sense of being afraid of Allah	247	97.2
Feeling of guilt for not following the religious obligations	241	94.9
Having a sense of being afraid of not observing fasting in the month of Ramadan	239	94.1
Having a sense of being afraid of not praying to Allah everyday	238	93.7
Having a sense of fear for being present in Hasorer Maidan	240	94.5
Having a feeling of being punished by Allah while doing something wrong	183	72.0
Having a feeling of being tempted by the Devil	225	88.6
Having a feeling of being tempted by the Hurs/Goleman for doing right things	84	33.1
Reacting to criticism against religious beliefs	203	79.9
Conversion for the sake of love	8	3.1

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254.

The above table reveals that 88.6 percent of the respondents reported of being allured by the Devil. Whereas 79.9 percent of the respondents reacted after hearing criticism against their religious beliefs and 72 percent reported a feeling of being punished by Allah while doing something wrong. In case of conversion, 3.1 percent of the respondents said that they can/will convert for the sake of love.

4.3 Ritualistic Religiosity

The table 4 represents a summary of the indicators used to assess the ritualistic religiosity among youth. Out of 254 respondents, 52.8 percent of the respondents pray to Allah everyday and 28 percent of them pray five times a day and 12.6 percent pray four times a day while 9.1 percent pray three times and another 3.1 percent pray 2 times a day to Allah.

Table 4. Ritualistic religiosity of the respondents

Ritualistic religiosity	Frequency	Percentage	N
Praying everyday (Salat)	134	52.8	254
Frequency of praying Salat everyday			
2 times	8	3.1	134
3 times	23	9.1	134
4 times	32	12.6	134
5 times	71	28.0	134
Reciting the Holy Quran daily	24	9.4	254
Observing fasting at Ramadan	246	96.9	254
Observing 30 days of fasting at the whole month of Ramadan	143	56.3	246

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254

Only 9.4 percent out of 254 respondents recite the Holy Quran daily. In case of observing fasting, majority of the respondents (96.9 percent) do fasting during the holy month of Ramadan and 56.3 percent of them observe fasting in the whole month of Ramadan.

4.4 Consequential Religiosity

The table 5 demonstrates the influence of religion on the life of youth. Out of 254 respondents, 30.3 percent of the respondents follow the Holy Quran while taking everyday decisions, 9.4 percent avoid friendship with opposite sex for the sake of religion and 88.6 percent have boy/girlfriends. On the other hand, 97.6 percent of the respondents watch television, take photo of themselves and 96.1 percent listen to music. Again, 77.6 percent and 73.2 percent of 254 respondents start anything by remembering Allah and follow the rules of giving Salam as Sunnah respectively.

Table 5. Consequential religiosity of the respondents

Consequential religiosity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Taking helps from the Holy Qur'an for making everyday decisions	77	30.3
'Giving salam to a Muslim is sunnot, always following it	186	73.2
Starting anything in the name of Allah	197	77.6
Consuming Alcohol or Smoking	33	13.0
Ever eating haram meat	25	9.8
Avoiding any kind of companionship with the opposite sex	24	9.4
Having boy/girlfriend	225	88.6
Listening music/ Muslims should not listen to music	244	96.1
Muslims should not watch television/ Watching television	248	97.6
Muslims should not watch movie/Watching movie	242	95.3
Muslims should not take photos/Taking self-photo	248	97.6
Hanging animal pictures in the room	44	17.3

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254.

In Table 5, 13 percent of the respondents are addicted to smoking or alcohol use and 9.8 percent has ever eaten haram meat. Whereas 17.3 percent of the respondents reported having pictures of animals in their room.

4.5 Intellectual Religiosity

The table 6 represents the percentage of answers of respondents about some of the basic knowledge and history about Islam. 96.1 percent out of 254 respondents know the location of Kaba Sharif, 89.4 percent are able to tell the date of birth of prophet Muhammad, 88.6 percent know the name of the first and last prophets of Islam, and 84.6 percent of the respondents know the name of the Holy place of Islam. 80.7 percent of the respondents do know the number of basic pillars of Islam but only 32.3 percent of them are able to tell the name of those pillars. On the other hand, 73.2 percent of the respondents are able to distinguish between the Holy Quran and Hadith, 70.1 percent do know the number of heaven and hell, 69.7 percent tend to know the number of Paras and Surahs in the Holy Quran, 60.6 percent are able to tell the number of Asmani Kitab, 53.9 percent do know the number of Kolema and 52.8 percent are able to tell the name of the Surah first appeared in the Holy Quran.

Table 6. Intellectual religiosity of the respondent

Intellectual religiosity	Correctly answered (%)	Wrongly answered (%)	Not answered (%)
First and last prophets of Islam	88.6	9.8	1.6
Basic pillars of Islam	80.7	13.4	5.9
Name of the basic pillars	32.3	48.4	19.3
Name of the Holy place of Islam	84.6	5.9	9.4
Number of heaven and hell	70.1	22.0	7.9
Location of Kaba Sharif	96.1	2.0	2.0
Date of birth of Prophet Muhammad	89.4	4.3	6.3
Place where the Holy Quran was first appeared	69.7	12.2	18.1
First appeared Surah of the Holy Quran	52.8	19.3	28.0
Number of Paras and Surahs in the Holy Quran	69.7	19.7	10.6
Number of Shijda in the Holy Quran	37.0	13.8	49.2
Difference between the Holy Quran and Hadith	73.2	6.7	20.1
Meaning of Namaz (Salat)	31.1	22.8	46.1
Amount of gold and silver leading for Zakat	24.4	37.8	37.8
Number of Kolema	53.9	31.5	14.6
Prohibited persons for marriage	22.4	32.3	45.3
Number of Asmani Kitab	60.6	30.7	8.7

Source: Field Survey 2019, N=254

Out of 254 respondents, 37.0 percent of the respondents do know the number of Shijda in the Holy Quran, 31.1 percent know the meaning of Namaz while 24.4 percent of the respondents know the certain amount gold and silver for which a person has to give Zakat. On the other hand, 22.4 percent of the respondents are able to tell the persons with whom engaging in a marital relationship are prohibited.

5. Discussion

Religion is the most static element of society till the very beginning of the civilization. In the age of advanced science and technology the existence of religion in the society is obviously different from its classical formation. But religion is still significant in the society. Despite its marginalization by modernity and secularization, religion remains a central component of

individual and society (Anderson, 2015). Religiosity cannot be found as an all quality or as non-quality within an individual. Every individual may have certain degree of it. It is an umbrella term referring to degree of religious behavior, belief or spirituality. Religiosity or religiousness, in its broadest sense, is comprehensive term used to refer to the numerous aspects of religious activity, dedication and belief (King and Hunt, 1972). The religious commitment of an individual may not same at every dimension of religiosity. As the findings of the study shows that the ideological dimension of religiosity is very strong among the respondents. In that dimension, most of the beliefs basically rely on the abstract idea of religion which is beyond any objectivity. The belief in supernatural world is very much adherent to subjective possession. Almost all of the respondents who belong to the young generation of the twenty-first century are still very much adherent to the religion in the dimension of ideological religiosity. The unquestioned belief in the existence of Allah is the foundation of Muslim piety. Though almost 99 percent of respondents states positive assurance in this regard, one percent respondents show their position as the non-believers to the existence of Allah. Almost same figure is also shown in other formation of ideological religiosity of respondents in case of belief in Quranic miracles, belief in after life, belief in holy and sin etc. Nearly one to two percent respondents show their position as non-believer in the case of different indicators of ideological religiosity. The similar tendency has been shown in the dimension of experiential religiosity. Majority of the respondents shows a strong possession of experiential religiosity. In case of ritualistic dimension of religiosity, 53 percent of respondents perform Salat everyday though among them only 28 percent pray exactly 5 times as required in Islam. Only 9 percent of respondents recite Holy Quran every day. In case of fasting in the Holy month of Ramadan, the percentage is high with almost 97 percent though 56 percent do the all of the fasting in the whole month of Ramadan. Actually, the ritualistic religiosity is relatively low than the ideological dimension among respondents. Majority of the respondents are believers with their strong ideological and experiential religiosity but are not frequent performer of the basic rituals of Islam. Majority of the respondents shows less tendency to carry out their religious beliefs in their daily lives in case of consequential religiosity. Religious law does not only give guidance to the correct performance of the religious rituals, but also regulates the everyday life of believers (Menouar and Stiftung, 2014). Although almost all of the respondents concede to the Quranic word as the order of Allah about the way of life, only 30 percent of them take help from the Holy Quran for making their decisions in everyday lives. That means 70 percent of respondents does not conform with their beliefs and activities. There is the restriction of interaction among male and female in Islam but only 9 percent of respondents obey this rule in their life by avoiding friendship with opposite sex. The basic knowledge about the rules and history of Islam among respondents (intellectual religiosity) is not in its highest level as seen in ideological religiosity. Generally, the contents of Quran and Sunnah are the main source of Islamic knowledge and it is expected that believers know a minimum of these contents (Waardenburg, 2002). Only 32 percent of respondents are able to outline the name of the basic pillars of Islam; and only 31 percent know the meaning of Salat. In case of knowledge about the details of Quran, Zakat, Islamic marriage system, a significant number of respondents cannot answer correctly. Above all, the basic knowledge about the rules and

regulations of Islam is not at satisfactory level among respondents as wished to have perfect piety in Islam. Without knowing the details of religion majority of the respondents hold their belief frame which they ascribed by birth in a Muslim family.

6. Conclusion

Religiosity is not found within an individual with its whole frame. Each individual may have religious commitment with varied access to each dimension. Majority of the Muslim youth are strong in their ideological dimension of religiosity. And their experiential religiosity also follows the same trend with the ideological one. But in ritualistic and consequential dimension their position is not significant at all. Majority of them are believer than performer. Though they are not religiously strict performer, majority of them cannot take any criticism about religion. The basic knowledge about rules of Islam and its history which exposes intellectual religiosity is in moderate level. The study has some limitations which can be improvised in the next researches. The study is organized with the general description of the different dimensions of religiosity among respondents. The study may examine how does different social characteristics like age, sex, educational qualification, economic status etc. of respondents influence their religious commitment.

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