

RELATIONSHIP AMONG ISLAMIC DRESS, RELIGIOUS VALUES AND ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR

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Key words: Dress, Religious values and Altruistic behavior

Abstract

The present study explored the relationship among Islamic dress, religious values and altruistic behavior. For the study, a total of 120 individuals (60 males and 60 females) were taken by purposive and convenient sampling method. The age of the participants was ranged from 18 to 26 years. To measure altruistic behavior, a pile of loose papers, some books, eraser, etc. and to measure the religious values of the participants, the Allport-Vernon-Lidzey Value Scale were applied on participants selected from different categories. Results showed that dress is significantly correlated with religious values and altruistic behavior. Significant differences have been found in both religious values and altruistic behavior between the participants wearing secular dress and Islamic dress and between male and female respondents. Significant interaction effect also has been found between dress and gender. Result revealed that the participants wearing Islamic dress have more religious values ($M = 37.31$, $SD = 6.89$) and they show greater altruistic behavior ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.64$) than those wear Secular dress ($M = 34.41$, $SD = 6.64$ and $M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.54$) respectively. In terms of gender difference, it has been found that boys reported significantly less religious values ($t = -2.14$, $p < .01$) and greater altruistic behavior ($t = 4.59$, $p < 0.05$) in comparison to girls.

Introduction

Altruistic or helping behavior has currently become the topic of special interest in social psychology. It was the shocking murder of Miss Kitty Genovese in 1964, which sparked off the interest in this topic in psychology. Thirty eight people witnessed her murder; none of them came to her rescue. Though this case was much-talked event in the then American society, we are frequently watching similar types of cases with diversified helping behavioral patterns in our society. Altruism refers to "behavior carried out to benefit another without anticipation of rewards from external sources"⁽¹⁾. Altruism occurs when we donate blood, when we stop to help a stranger who has been stranded on the highway, when we volunteer at a homeless shelter or donate to a charity, or when we get involved to prevent a crime from occurring. Altruism also defined on the basis of three criteria - (i) Self-ending (ii) Good in nature (iii) Voluntary⁽²⁾. It has been found that

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helping behavior was most likely to be reciprocated when it was perceived as voluntary & intentional. It should be stressed that not all helping behavior is altruistic in origin⁽³⁾.

Social scientists generally support the influence of state on the level of altruism. Numerous studies in the field have significantly confirmed that subjects are more likely to help if they feel guilty about some transgression which they have recently committed⁽³⁻⁵⁾. Several factors like religious values, presence of bystanders, time pressure, gender etc. influence the altruistic behavior of the people. Among these in the present research more importance is given on religiosity factor which is discussed below:

One of the major factors that influence the altruism slope is religious values. Religious values are ethical principles founded in religious traditions, texts and beliefs. In contrast to personal values, religious values are based on scriptures and a religion's established norms. Religiosity means representing the adherence to the practices and beliefs of an organized church or religious institution⁽⁶⁾. On the other hand religiosity can also be defined as a multi-layered concept involving cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral aspects⁽⁷⁾. All major religious texts explicitly encourage altruism, therefore, the stronger a person's religious belief, the more the person should be altruistic⁽⁸⁾. In fact, a study in 2007 shows that the link between religion and altruism is so firmly entrenched in people's belief system that even when individuals are primed with a positive concept of religion, they become more altruistic⁽⁹⁾.

The link between religion and altruism likely arises from a number of cognitive and social mechanisms. Connections to cognitive factors, such as fear of supernatural punishment from gods that are a constant moral audience can increase self-regulation that is needed for altruism⁽⁹⁾. Other social influences shape motivations to be prosocial, such as a sense of shared group identity and morality of the group⁽¹⁰⁾. Religious communities serve as in-groups that define and enforce moral rules, promote reciprocity, and reward participation in costly prosocial and ritual behavior⁽¹¹⁾. These different forces each shape altruistic behavior by different routes, but all demonstrate the close association between morality and religion. A study investigating volunteerism among adults, measured in a Gallup poll, found that 46% of "highly spiritual" people were committed to working with the poor⁽¹²⁾. Another study among 142 high school students identified religiosity as a significant predictor of kindness, as well as anonymous and altruistic prosocial behavior⁽¹³⁾. Regular church attendees who reported that they often felt the influence of divine love were more likely to do volunteer work⁽¹⁴⁾. A study of highly prosocial "moral exemplars" found that the majority cited religion or spirituality as a reason for helping others⁽¹⁵⁾. While examining the relationship between religion and altruistic behavior, findings reveal no evidence of religious prosociality⁽¹⁶⁾. A group of researchers⁽¹⁷⁾ concluded that an "important discrepancy seems to exist between self-reports and laboratory studies regarding altruism among religious people". They suggested that this involves moral hypocrisy on the part of religious people. Similar

studies using self-report measures, have found a weak positive link between religiosity and altruism⁽¹⁸⁾.

Controversial results had been found when investigators tried to find out the role of gender in altruism. Evidence showed that men are more likely to help than are women⁽¹⁹⁾ and other research showed that women are more likely to help than are men⁽²⁰⁾, and even more research showed that there is no difference between men and women's helping behavior⁽²¹⁾.

There has been a significant increase in militant activities in Bangladesh in recent years, particularly in 2015. It has been believed that most of these militants wear Islamic religious dresses like long Punjabi-pajama with cap and female wear burka with hijab and people also strongly believe that our choices of dress indicate our religious values and have influence on our behavior. But as far as we know, no research has been done to see the relation among these three variables. So this research was done to find out whether people's religious values and religious dress have any effect on altruistic behavior. Despite this, previous research has been unable to show a correlation between being religious and helping others in behavioral studies⁽¹⁶⁾. This paper focused on the helping behavior between practicing members of the religious and secular community which is a purely scientific curiosity for exploring the relationship among dress, religious values and altruistic behavior of people.

The objectives of the present study were to investigate (i) whether dress has any relation with altruistic behavior and religious value, (ii) whether altruistic behavior and religious values differ according to dress, (iii) whether male and female participants have any difference in religious values and altruistic behavior.

Materials and Methods

For the study a total of 120 university students (60 male and 60 female) were taken by purposive and convenient sampling method. Among the males thirty (30) respondents were on religious attire (e.g. wearing long panjabi-payjama at least last 3 years) and the rest thirty (30) were secularly dressed. Among the female thirty (30) girls were on religious dress up like wearing burka and hijab and the rest thirty (30) girls were secularly dressed. The age of the participants was ranged from 18 to 26 years. Most of them were belonged to middle to higher class family.

A pile of loose papers, some books, eraser, pencil etc. were being used to measure the altruistic behavior and only the part of religious values of Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Value Scale (1951) was used for measuring religious values of the participants⁽²²⁾. The adapted Bangla version of value scale translated by Latif (1991) contains a total number of 45 statements regarding six values (theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious)⁽²³⁾. The scale is divided into two parts. Part-1 consists of 30 items with two alternative answers and Part-2 consists of 15 items with four alternative answers. In all

there are 120 answers, 20 of which refer to each of the six values. The split-half reliability coefficients of the scale ranged from 0.80 to 0.88, the test retest reliability coefficients ranged from 0.85-0.94. For religious values split-half reliability is 0.86, test-retest reliability is 0.88 and correlation coefficient is 0.93. An obtained score for each of the values falling inside the 34-46 limits, it is considered as normal or average. On the other hand, if it falls outside these limits, it is considered as high or low score. The general norm for religious value is 40.51.

For this study, at first the experimenter selected persons who were on Islamic religious dress-up. For example: girls wearing burka- hijab and boys wearing panjabi-payjama. Then they were requested to participate in a psychological research in the laboratory. In the laboratory while talking with them about their demographic information and about the questionnaire, the experimenter was acted by dropping some books, pen, pencil, eraser etc. close to the participant 'accidentally'. The participant was defined as helping if he or she pick up one or more pages or books or other things. That is, the more the objects they picked up, the more altruistic they were considered. After that they were requested to fill in the questionnaire on values. This procedure continued for sixty religiously dressed male and female. The same above procedure was acted with the people who were secularly dressed. All the participants were selected purposefully and conveniently. To control the time effect all the data were collected between 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. As research assistants, 2 M.S. students (1 male and 1 female) of psychology collected the data and they were not informed about the purpose of the study. Thus the experimenter expectancy effect was controlled.

Results and Discussion

To investigate the relation among dress, Religious values and Altruistic behavior Pearson product moment correlation was computed. At the same time, in order to examine whether religious values and altruistic behavior varied as a function of dress and gender, the respondents' scores were analyzed by 2 × 2 analysis of variance. The results are presented in Tables 1 to 4.

Table 1. Simple correlations among dress, religious values, and altruistic behavior.

Variables	1	2	3
1. Islamic dress	1		
2. Religious values	0.21*	1	
3. Altruistic behavior	0.39**	0.094	1

**P <.01 (2-tailed), *P <.05 (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that Islamic dress is positively correlated with religious values ($r = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$), and altruistic behavior ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01z$). But, religious value is not

significantly correlated with altruistic behavior. The result indicates that more the dress is Islamic, the more will be the religious values and altruistic behavior (Table 4). This finding is consistent with some previous findings^(15,24). Those findings suggested that people's spiritual or religious beliefs help them feel more personally fulfilled and worthy, leading them to participate in activities that heighten their levels of self-actualization, including altruistic behavior. The present study did not show any significant relation between altruistic behavior and religious values. This finding is also consistent with previous research finding⁽¹⁷⁾.

The result presented in Table 2 and 3 shows significant differences in "religious values" and "altruistic behavior" between wearing religious dress and secular dress respondents ($F = 26.25$, $df = 1, 116$) and between male and female participants ($F = 26.25$, $df = 1, 116$). It is apparent from Table 4 that respondents in religious dress obtained higher scores both in religious values ($M = 37.32$) and altruistic behavior ($M = 5.48$) than respondents in secular dress ($M = 34.41$ and $M = 4.15$). This finding can be explained by previous findings. Previous study revealed that regular religious behavior has a positive correlation with altruistic behavior⁽¹⁵⁾. In the light of that finding, it can be said that may be wearing regular Islamic dress increase religious value and altruistic behavior. A group of psychologists suggested that peoples' religious belief help them feel more personally fulfilled and worthy, leading them to participate in activities which heightened their levels of self-actualization including altruistic behavior^(14,26). These are may be another reasons for more religious value and greater altruistic behavior in wearing Islamic dress respondents, which needs further exploration.

Table 1. Summary of the analysis of variance for "religious values" according to dress and gender.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Dress (Religious/Secular)	249.40	1	249.40	5.96	0.01
Gender (Male/Female)	210.67	1	210.67	5.03	0.02
Dress × Gender	267.00	1	267.00	6.38	0.01
Within cells	4854.03	116	41.84		

The findings of the Tables 2 and 3 showed that males and females were significantly differ from one another in terms of two major variables investigated in the present study (i. e. religious values and altruistic behavior). It has been found that males scored significantly less religious values ($M = 34.55$) and greater altruistic behavior ($M = 5.48$) in comparison to females ($M = 37.18$ and $M = 4.15$, respectively). There is evidence that shows men are more likely to help than are women⁽¹⁹⁾ and other research shows women are most likely to help than men⁽²⁰⁾ and even more research shows that there is no difference between men and women's helping behavior⁽²¹⁾. We see men are more helpful

than women in some specific situation. They offer more help when intervention is dangerous (consistent with heroic role), and audience is present (amplifying normative pressure-men should help people in need), and other helpers are available (amplifying competition to perform)⁽²⁵⁾. Furthermore, male are likely to perform a helping behavior that they feel comfortable engaging in. May be, the male respondents of the present study focused more on this factor and for this reason they showed more helping behaviors than females.

Table 2. Summary of the analysis of variance for “altruistic behavior” according to dress and gender.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Dress (Religious/Secular)	53.33	1	53.33	26.25	.00
Gender(Male/Female)	53.33	1	53.33	26.25	.00
Dress × Gender	9.63	1	9.63	4.74	0.03
Within cells	235.66	116	2.03		

Table 3. Mean scores in religious value and altruistic behavior according to dress and gender.

	Religious value		Altruistic behavior	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Islamic	\bar{x} =34.5	\bar{x} = 40.13	\bar{x} =6.23	\bar{x} =4.2
Mean	\bar{x} =37.42		\bar{x} =5.22	
Secular	\bar{x} =34.73	\bar{x} =35.93	\bar{x} = 4.53	\bar{x} =3.77
Mean	\bar{x} =35.33		\bar{x} =4.15	
	\bar{x} =34.62	\bar{x} =38.03	\bar{x} =5.38	\bar{x} =3.99

The male respondents of the present study significantly scored lowered in religious values than female respondents. We know, males are genetically stronger than females, enjoy liberty in many spheres of life, and opportunities are more open for their growth and development. In our society, males and females often differ in their patterns of development and socialization which, in turn shapes their religious values. On the other hand, from the very childhood, children in Bangladesh, specially female children, are taught to conform to what the elders desire and be obedient to the parents and other superiors. They are asked for doing what is socially accepted and proper⁽²⁷⁾. May be for this reason, women scored higher in religious values than their male counterpart.

From Table 2, it is also revealed that there is a significant interaction between dress and gender. It has been found that male respondent in Islamic dress scored highest

M=6.23) and female in secular dress scored lowest (M=3.77) in helping behavior. Table 3 also shows a significant interaction between dress and gender in religious values. It has been found that female respondents in religious dress have highest (M=40.13) and male respondents in religious dress have the lowest (M=34.5) religious values. Both of the interaction could be explained by the dimension of religiosity. There are different dimensions of religiosity⁽²⁸⁾. Among them most important three are: religious belief, religious practice and spirituality. For example, an individual who does not hold orthodox Muslim beliefs (belief dimension), but does attend a charismatic worship service (practice dimension) in order to develop his/ her sense of oneness with the divine power (spirituality dimension). According to these dimensions, It can be said that , may be the male respondents of the present study in religious dress showed more religious practice dimension and females in religious dress showed more religious belief, not practice.

Here it can be cited that after finishing the answer of the questionnaire one question was asked those participants who wear Islamic dress. The question was "Why do you wear this dress?" 100% of male participant wearing Islamic dress replied that due to religious issue they wear this. On the other hand, 73.33% female participants in Islamic dress answered they wear this dress mainly for their personal security. When they wear this dress, they face less harassment or bullying. Though male participants of the present study gave emphasis on religious issues, they scored lowered in religious values. There was always a dilemma of dress code and behavior and the present study did not succeeded to remove that dilemma. But the study indicated that rather than dress, may be other factors such as personality, self- control, self- concept etc. play important role in this regard, which needs further studies.

In conclusion, findings of the present study can provide a greater understanding of why people with Islamic dress fail to do what is morally expected and why male and female show different type of altruistic behavior. Despite this, the result of the study can provide valuable information for future researchers, interested in this issue.

Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the Biotechnology Research Centre for providing financial assistance to carry out the research work.

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(Manuscript received on 28 November, 2019; revised on 20 July, 2020)