

Research Article

The Relationship Between Religiosity and Some Moral Attitudes and Values

Dindarlığın Bazı Ahlaki Tutum ve Değerlerle İlişkisi

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between religiosity and selected moral attitudes, value orientations, and social behaviors through a systematic literature review based on empirical findings from both Western literature and research conducted in Türkiye. Rather than relying on purely theoretical or normative assumptions, the study focuses on how religiosity is reflected in concrete domains of moral life. In this framework, key areas such as honesty and academic cheating, substance use, sexual behavior, social deviance and crime, value orientations, prosocial behavior, forgiveness, and work ethics are systematically reviewed. The findings indicate that religiosity does not exert a uniform or deterministic influence across all moral domains. While the relationship between religiosity and behaviors such as honesty and academic cheating appears weak or inconsistent, religiosity demonstrates a more consistent and protective role in areas such as alcohol, tobacco, and illicit substance use. Evidence related to sexual behavior suggests that higher levels of religiosity are associated with more conservative attitudes and lower engagement in premarital and risky sexual practices. In the context of social deviance and crime, the influence of religiosity appears limited and context-dependent, though it may function as a deterrent under certain conditions. In contrast, the impact of religiosity on value orientations is more pronounced. Religiosity is positively associated with values such as tradition, conformity, benevolence, and security, while showing negative associations with hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction. Moreover, religiosity is linked to prosocial tendencies such as empathy, helping behavior, charitable giving, and forgiveness, although these effects are often confined to in-group contexts. Overall, the article argues that religiosity does not operate as an absolute determinant of moral attitudes and behaviors but produces selective and context-sensitive effects through normative, integrative, and motivational mechanisms.

Keywords: Religiosity, Moral Attitudes, Value Orientations, Prosocial Behavior, Substance Use, Sexual Behavior; Social Deviance, Forgiveness.

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Özet

Bu makale, Batı literatüründeki ampirik bulgular ile Türkiye’de yürütülen araştırmalara dayanan sistematik bir literatür taraması aracılığıyla, dindarlık ile belirli ahlaki tutumlar, değer yönelimleri ve sosyal davranışlar arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Kuramsal ve normatif varsayımlardan ziyade, dindarlığın ahlaki yaşantının somut alanlarındaki yansımaları ele alınmaktadır. Bu çerçevede dürüstlük ve akademik hile, madde kullanımı, cinsel davranışlar, toplumsal sapma ve suç, değer yönelimleri, toplum yanlısı davranışlar, affedicilik ve çalışma ahlakı gibi başlıca alanlara odaklanılmaktadır. Araştırma bulguları, dindarlığın tüm ahlaki alanlarda tekdüze ve belirleyici bir etki oluşturmadığını göstermektedir. Dürüstlük ve kopya çekme gibi davranışlarda dindarlık ile ilişki zayıf veya tutarsız görünürken; alkol, sigara ve uyuşturucu kullanımı gibi alanlarda dindarlığın daha tutarlı ve koruyucu bir rol oynadığı görülmektedir. Cinsel davranışlara ilişkin bulgular, yüksek dindarlık düzeylerinin daha muhafazakâr tutumlar, evlilik öncesi ve riskli cinsel davranışlarda azalma ile ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Toplumsal sapma ve suç bağlamında ise dindarlığın etkisinin sınırlı ve bağlama bağlı olduğu, ancak bazı durumlarda caydırıcı bir işlev görebildiği anlaşılmaktadır. Buna karşılık, dindarlığın değer yönelimleri üzerindeki etkisinin daha belirgin olduğu; özellikle geleneksellik, uyum, iyilikseverlik ve güvenlik gibi değerlere olumlu, hazcılık, uyarılım ve özyönelim gibi değerlere ise olumsuz yönde ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca dindarlığın empati, yardım etme, bağış ve affedicilik gibi toplum yanlısı eğilimlerle ilişkili olduğu, ancak bu etkinin çoğu zaman grup içi sınırlar içinde kaldığı anlaşılmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, dindarlığın ahlaki tutum ve davranışları mutlak biçimde belirleyen bir unsur olmadığını; ancak normatif, bütünleştirici ve motivasyonel mekanizmalar aracılığıyla seçici ve bağlama duyarlı etkiler ürettiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dindarlık, Ahlaki Tutumlar, Değer Yönelimleri, Toplum Yanlısı Davranış, Madde Kullanımı, Cinsel Davranışlar, Toplumsal Sapma, Affedicilik.

Introduction

Does an individual's religiosity make a difference in their moral attitudes and behaviors? In other words, is there a noticeable difference between being religious and being moral and possessing certain values? Leaving aside theoretical considerations, how do these questions manifest in real life? This article seeks to answer these questions in the context of some research findings.

It is generally accepted that religious people tend to be more “conservative” in many respects. Conservatism, in its traditional sense, differs from other schools of thought by opposing the dismantling of established values and institutions, and by being sensitive to religious and moral issues. Similar attitudes and understandings are encountered in countries like the US, as well as in our own country, regarding issues such as abortion and homosexuality. A review of numerous studies conducted in the West reveals much data supporting this view. According to these studies, those who are generally more religious exhibit a stance against abortion, divorce, pornography, contraception, premarital sex, homosexuality, feminism, nudity in advertisements, heavy metal and rap music, and topless women on beaches. Conversely, religious individuals tend to support issues such as marriage, the death penalty, revenge, traditional gender roles, conservative political parties, harsher penalties, and the censorship of sexuality and violence in mass media.

It is understandable that religiosity leads to a tendency to preserve and perpetuate traditional moral values. Religious teachings emphasize order, justice, compassion, responsibility, and goodness

in society, while establishing avoidance of harmful and destructive behaviors as a rule of conduct. However, the relationship between religion and moral issues should not be considered fixed and unchanging. It is a fact that many other factors outside of religion influence moral behavior. Furthermore, according to Kohlberg, moral maturity, in the sense of adopting attitudes and behaviors consistent with our moral judgments, does not occur before the age of 21 (Kohlberg, 1973). The development of attitudes and behaviors consistent with this ideal principle of conduct can develop at different levels in the life of each religious person, depending on many different variables. Therefore, it seems that religious individuals' ability to exhibit the moral principles they have adopted according to their belief system is possible both through internalizing their religious beliefs and by fulfilling the biological conditions required for moral maturity.

In this study, empirical findings from both Western literature and research conducted in Türkiye are brought together through a systematic review approach, adopting a descriptive method based on a comprehensive survey of the relevant literature. To understand in which areas religiosity makes a difference, it would be appropriate to take a look at the results of the research conducted.

Honesty and Religiosity

According to research conducted in the West, academic cheating is very common in high schools and universities, including among students in religious schools. 92% of religious school students stated that cheating is morally wrong, and 87% supported the idea that “If everyone else is cheating, why shouldn't I?” Similarly, one study revealed that 72% of a group of religious school students admitted to cheating on exams. When encouraged to lie and cheat, both religious and secular high school students showed “surprisingly high rates of cheating.” It appears that cheating is quite common among high school and university students, even those who consider themselves religious. Ultimately, no correlation was found between religion and honesty or cheating. Subsequent research, including measures of behavior and different samples, confirmed that religion does not reduce cheating behavior. While some more religious individuals reported being more honest than less religious individuals, these findings contradict research indicating no correlation and even a positive correlation between lie scale scores and religiosity. More importantly, there is little evidence to suggest that religious people are more honest or less likely to lie or cheat compared to less religious or non-religious people. Conversely, it has been observed that more religious people are less likely to commit tax fraud (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 383-87).

Similar to examples in the West, various studies conducted in different departments of our country's universities show an increase in student cheating behavior in recent years. Experts believe that cheating is widespread among students at a rate of 75-90%. While cheating is perceived by students as partly dishonest, haram, and sinful, they state that students with low self-esteem cheat more, that cheating is mostly unrelated to conscience, that the education system forces students to cheat, and that students who cheat are sometimes perceived as honest. Students have been found to experience a certain degree of discomfort when they cheat. Those who consider cheating morally

unacceptable tend to cheat less, while those who do engage in cheating often do so consciously, despite recognizing that the behavior is wrong. In one study, most students (73%) identified themselves as religious; however, a substantial proportion (38.7%) reported that their beliefs did not influence their level of cheating. The proportion of students who stated that “being religious affects my cheating” (12.9%) was identical to that of those who indicated that it affects their behavior because it constitutes a violation of others’ rights (12.9%). These research findings indicate either no correlation or a very low correlation between cheating and religiosity. Furthermore, it was found that students felt uncomfortable after cheating but not after giving someone else the answers. According to the researcher, it is quite concerning that students who identify themselves as religious see no problem in exhibiting unethical behavior during the exam (Küçüktepe, 2014, pp. 263-719).

Another study reveals that cheating is a problem even among theology students. The results indicate that 65% of theology students reported engaging in cheating during their studies, albeit at varying frequencies. The majority of students consider cheating a “bad behavior that should be prevented.” However, they do not perceive cheating as a morally reprehensible act like theft. Only a low percentage (6.4%) agrees with the idea that “cheating is theft and should definitely be punished.” Conversely, a considerable percentage want cheating to be tolerated. The fact that students who cheat are often described as “students who don't study regularly” supports this idea. The percentage of those who consider cheating a behavioral disorder is extremely low. These results may primarily be related to the lack of a clear ruling in religious sources regarding cheating being an immoral act. Indeed, a large majority of students do not see the issue as a moral problem (Kaymakcan 2002, pp. 127-138).

Substance Use and Religiosity

The religious teachings of different groups generally oppose alcohol and illegal drugs. Therefore, it might be expected that faith would be associated with less substance use/abuse. The current literature confirms this. Studies from before the mid-1970s and research from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s consistently confirmed that more religious individuals (according to different definitions) consumed less alcohol and drugs.

Religiosity, particularly participation in religious activities, is associated with lower levels of alcohol consumption among university students. In Canadian hospitalized patients, those who practiced religious worship more frequently had lower current and past alcohol consumption. Similarly, a significant negative association was found between religious participation and alcohol consumption within six hours of entering emergency care. The importance of religion resulted in a lower rate of initiation of alcohol consumption, lower alcohol consumption, and a lower likelihood of excessive drinking among high school seniors. Similar findings exist regarding tobacco. Religiosity was found to be consistently and negatively associated with different types of substance abuse among high school seniors. Furthermore, these findings are valid regardless of age and gender,

with various exceptions across different cultures. Parental religiosity may also be associated with lower substance use among children.

The inverse relationship between religion and substance use/abuse involves many factors, and numerous theories have been proposed to explain this relationship. Almost all of these studies focus on the social control function of religion: Religious institutions and traditions maintain social order by deterring deviance, flaws, and self-harming behaviors. Furthermore, religion prevents substance use through norms and values that support personal restraint. This is referred to as the ‘normative’ function of religion, whereby religion dictates to a reference group what attitudes and behaviors should be adopted toward alcohol and other substances. Additionally, some experts suggest that religion can be an alternative way to meet basic needs (as an alternative to drugs and alcohol), such as relieving grief or social anxiety, or providing an alternative to feelings of meaninglessness and exclusion. This second mechanism is the “integrative” function of religion, meaning the religious group provides an understanding of acceptance for the individual, and this social support leads to less reliance on anxiety-reducing mechanisms like alcohol and drugs. Some have argued that religion, in addition to its social control mechanisms, indirectly reduces alcohol and drug use/abuse by “promoting environmental and psychological values that restrict risk-taking.” What is suggested here is that religion attempts to elicit positive behaviors through family harmony and parental support, as well as by promoting pro-community values and social competence. Other studies have shown that religious youth generally avoid behaviors that endanger their health and engage in behaviors that improve their health. Furthermore, it has been suggested that self-control and lower personal tolerance for deviance also play a role in the effect of religiosity on substance use. Parental support and lower levels of parent-child conflict have also been found to reduce substance use.

It has been suggested that religious beliefs act as a buffer for university students and can deter individuals from deciding to use alcohol and drugs. In this sense, religion may play a role in prevention. However, numerous studies have now shown that spirituality and religiosity are helpful factors in the process of substance use recovery. This is generally because individuals who lead a more religious or spiritual life exhibit positive mental health characteristics such as higher coping skills and optimism, and high social support. Moreover, those who report being more religious have been able to protect themselves from illicit drugs for longer periods during the first 6 months of the treatment program and have been more successful in overcoming addiction. Religious or spiritual emphasis in treatment programs has been shown to contribute moderately positively to treatment outcomes. It has been suggested that patients show spiritual growth during substance use treatment with a spiritual emphasis, and that this treatment, which provides a sense of meaning and hope, can be effective in the outcome of treatment. The most prominent cause-and-effect interpretation is that greater religiosity somehow protects individuals from substance use and abuse. However, it seems logical that substance use reduces religiosity. For example, adolescents who experiment with alcohol and drugs may give less importance to religion in their lives, and religious prohibitions on substance use may make religious teachings seem less suitable and therefore less important to them. At least a

reciprocal causal relationship can be found between religiosity and substance use (Hood et al. 2009, pp. 387-393).

In one study (Yıldırım, 1997) conducted among university students, 42% of the total students stated that they smoked. Among these students, 39% described their family as “religious,” 57% as “somewhat religious,” and 4% as “atheist.” In contrast, 37% of students whose families were “religious,” 46% of those whose families were “somewhat religious,” and 60% of those whose families were “atheist” smoked. The differences between the percentages were found to be significant. Overall, the findings indicate that as the level of religiosity in the family increases, and consequently, as the level of religiosity among students who smoke increases, a significant decrease in the rate of smoking is observed. A similar pattern emerges when considering students’ own religiosity. Among those who reported smoking, 14% identified as “religious,” 63% as “somewhat religious,” and 23% as “atheist.” Correspondingly, 23% of “religious” students, 45% of “somewhat religious” students, and 66% of “atheist” students reported smoking, with these differences also reaching statistical significance. Taken together, these results suggest that smoking rates increase as individual religiosity decreases. These findings are consistent with the findings regarding the level of religiosity within the family. Based on these findings, it can be said that religious values are one of the factors preventing young people from developing a smoking habit.

According to the same study, 62% of university students use alcohol to varying degrees. It is noteworthy that approximately 25% of students use alcohol several times a week or daily. Within this 25% group, it can be assumed that 2% use alcohol daily and are therefore alcoholics, while 23% are at risk of addiction. When students who use alcohol are examined according to their families' level of religiosity, it is seen that 15% of students who describe their families as “religious” use alcohol; 33% of those who describe their families as “somewhat religious” use alcohol; and 51% of those who describe their religiosity as “atheist” use alcohol daily or several times a week. The differences between the percentages are considered significant. As can be seen, as the level of religiosity of the family decreases, a parallel increase in the rate of students who use alcohol is observed. Based on these results, it can be said that a quarter of university students are at risk of alcohol use, regardless of their level of religiosity or gender; however, children from atheist families are at slightly higher risk than children from religious families. When students who consume alcohol were examined according to their level of religiosity, it was observed that 25% of the students identified themselves as “religious,” 60% as “somewhat religious,” and 15% as “atheist.” Of the students who stated that they consumed alcohol daily, 27% were “somewhat religious,” and 73% were “atheist.” None of the religious students reported daily alcohol use. Furthermore, while the percentage of those who consumed alcohol several times a week was 5% within the religious group, this rate was 27% for the somewhat religious group and 36% for the atheists. The differences between the percentages were found to be statistically significant. As can be understood, the risk of alcohol use increases in groups as the level of religiosity decreases.

In the same study, 2% of the total students stated that they were using drugs. When drug users were examined according to their families' level of religiosity, it was observed that 50% of the students using drugs had families that were “religious,” 33% had families that were “somewhat religious,” and 17% had families that were “atheist.” A group-wise analysis revealed that drug use was reported by 2% of students from ‘religious’ families, 1% from ‘somewhat religious’ families, and 13% from ‘atheist’ families. The differences between the percentages were statistically significant. As shown by the results, as the level of religiosity of the family decreases, a significant increase is observed in the rate of drug use among young people from those families. When drug users were examined according to their level of religiosity, 17% of these students considered themselves “religious,” 58% considered themselves “somewhat religious,” and 25% considered themselves “atheist.” When each group is examined within itself, it is understood that 1% of the “religious” group, 2% of the “somewhat religious” group, and 3% of the “atheist” group use drugs. However, the differences between the percentages were not found to be significant. As can be seen, regardless of the students' level of religiosity, there are students who use drugs in every group (Yıldırım, 1997, 149-152). Another study found that Marmara University students with higher levels of religiosity consumed fewer cigarettes and alcohol (Ayten, 2013, p. 27).

In our country, rehabilitation centers established by members of some religious sects conduct studies within the framework of a faith-centered rehabilitation program to combat substance addiction, and significant results are obtained (Kızmaz & Çevik, 2016; Gürsu, 2017). Some of the activities or programs carried out within the scope of religious communities or associations affiliated with them have a process that also uses extremely modern treatment techniques. However, since the stages in the process always derive their motivation from faith and submission, the spiritual dimension of the work is extremely important.

Within this framework, based on the social learning perspective, it is argued that religion, due to the positive reinforcing function of religious peer groups, has a deterrent effect on crime by causing individuals to exhibit religious behavior. For individuals with substance addiction, being part of a religious peer group can play a supportive role in their recovery process. This is because the offending individual receives stimuli according to the nature of their peer group. In short, the reference group fulfills a deterrent role in crime by providing and reinforcing moral clarity. On the other hand, it can also be argued that emotional forms such as “fear of God,” “shame before God,” “fear of hell,” and “the reward of heaven” deter them from committing crimes. According to this theory, the fear stemming from belief in supernatural sanctions and punishments, and the expectation of reward for performing actions that religion demands of individuals, are thought to deter individuals from committing crimes. According to the fear of hell hypothesis, religiosity has a function at the individual level that can prevent individuals from committing crimes. At this stage, the spiritual support they receive motivates and encourages them to do so. The Sufi principle of seeking repentance and submitting to the protection of a spiritual guide gives strength and morale to addicts who cannot cope with the substance on their own. The idea of starting a new life under

the guidance of a spiritual guide lightens the heavy burden of the struggle against addiction. However, the process does not stop at this motivation alone; it involves maintaining motivation and providing institutional support to overcome the many difficulties faced by substance users. In the context of faith-based approaches to addiction, one of the most important stages of the program under consideration is resocialization. Resocialization primarily aims to repair family relationships. Acquiring a new social environment is another important feature of this program.

Sexual Behaviors and Religiosity

Religion has traditionally accepted that sexuality is appropriate only for its reproductive function within a marital relationship. Therefore, almost all forms of sexual expression outside of heterosexual marriage are considered inappropriate and sinful. These norms have remained strong and fixed for centuries. Despite some denominational differences, research in the West has generally shown that strong religious belief and participation are associated with a decrease in reported extramarital sexual activity, particularly premarital sex. This finding, despite these denominational differences, is supported by a considerable body of research literature. For example, a longitudinal study in New Zealand showed that men and women engaged in religious activities (measured at ages 11 and 21) abstained from sexual intercourse until at least age 21. Other studies also show that different measures of religiosity lead to a decrease in premarital sex. Much of this study was conducted on adolescents. The general pattern of results found in adolescents is also applicable to adults. The number of premarital sexual partners is lower within the religious population, partly due to the moral disapproval of premarital sex; the association between religiosity and premarital sex is almost identical in men and women. Analysis of accumulated data from general social surveys revealed that religious individuals were more likely to disapprove of premarital sex, extramarital sex, and homosexuality compared to less religious individuals. Consequently, the consistent tendency for religion to negatively correlate with attitudes and behaviors towards extramarital sex is largely uncontroversial (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 394-397).

A study conducted in our country shows that the most influential factor on conservative family values is religious beliefs. The fundamental tenets of Islam, conservative family values, and traditional gender roles are found to have the highest value. Frequency of worship was found to have the highest influence level after religious beliefs, both in terms of score and in relation to conservative family values and traditional gender roles. In conclusion, it is stated that religiosity is the most influential factor on attitudes towards family values. Regarding the relationship between religiosity and conservative family values, it is concluded that religiosity largely influences conservative attitudes (Doğan, 2016).

To protect against sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, avoiding risky sexual behaviors that could lead to transmission is of great importance, especially for adolescents. Most studies investigating the relationship between religiosity and risky sexual behaviors focus on polygamy, early onset of sexual activity, and unprotected sex, frequently examining adolescents and young adult

college students as their participant groups. While some studies have found a strong association between religiosity and risky sexual behavior, others have found no association or have yielded conflicting results.

Research has yielded significant findings suggesting that certain cultural norms, such as religiosity, reduce the likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behavior. The effect of religiosity on risky sexual behavior varies depending on age and type of religiosity; it is more protective in adolescents than in younger adults, and more protective in girls than in boys. Furthermore, intrinsic religiosity is more effective than extrinsic religiosity. Based on these findings, it has been argued that religiosity is negatively correlated with sexual risk-taking behavior and that it reduces risky sexuality. While research results measuring the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity components on adolescent risky sexual behavior show variability, a significant portion indicate that both components are associated with sexual risk-taking. Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity have a positive effect, particularly on risky sexual behaviors such as polygamy and early sexual initiation, reducing polygamy while increasing the age of sexual initiation. Almost all studies on young adulthood have focused on the sexual behavior of university students. Studies examining the effects of religiosity on risky sexual behavior among university students have generally found that the level of religiosity among young people is related to conservative sexuality and that religious students, especially female university students, seek emotional connection in sexual relationships. Since seeking emotional connection in relationships reduces promiscuity, it has been concluded that this has a lowering effect on HIV risk (Kıyloğlu, 2014).

A study investigating attitudes towards premarital sexual relations in our country was conducted on 150 Middle East Technical University students and found that being religious and traditional negatively affected engaging in premarital sexual relations, and that university students with religious attitudes did not approve of premarital relationships (Sakallı & Karakurt, 2001, p. 26).

In another study evaluating participants' premarital sexual experiences, those who had no experience with masturbation or sexual intercourse were found to have a higher rate of intensive daily religious practices compared to those who masturbated or had experience with intercourse. The result of the study suggests that those who did not masturbate or did not experience sexual intercourse avoided behaviors they considered sinful for religious reasons. The intensity of religious practice is a significant factor influencing premarital sexual experience and conservative sexual beliefs. Having conservative sexual beliefs and avoiding premarital sexual experience are interrelated (Eşsizoglu et al., 2009; Kaya et al., 2007).

One of the significant factors influencing attitudes and behaviors towards homosexuals is the level of religiosity. Studies have reported that individuals with strong religious beliefs have negative attitudes towards homosexuals. It has been emphasized that negative attitudes towards homosexuals increase with increasing levels of religiosity. A meta-analysis examining religiosity and attitudes towards lesbians and gays revealed an inverse relationship between various forms of religiosity (participation in religious activities, intrinsic-extrinsic religiosity, etc.) and attitudes towards lesbians

and gays; negative attitudes increase as the level of religiosity increases. According to a study on attitudes towards homosexuals in Türkiye, being religious, traditional, and conservative causes attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexuals to shift in a negative direction. The data obtained in this study revealed a relationship between attitudes towards gays and attitudes towards gays and lesbians and the level of religiosity; however, there was no relationship between attitudes towards lesbians and the level of religiosity. It was determined that as the level of religiosity increases, individuals' attitudes towards gays also increase negatively. Studies have shown that university students with strong religious beliefs also have negative attitudes towards homosexuals. A study examining the relationship between physical education teacher candidates' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men and their level of religiosity found that negative attitudes toward both groups increased as religiosity levels increased (Saraç, 2014).

Social Deviance, Criminal Behavior, and Religiosity

Social deviance refers to socially unacceptable behavior, characteristics, or conditions that violate acceptable standards of appearance or behavior within a group. When individuals fail to act virtuously or cause harm to others, crime/guilt are broadly considered moral feelings or moral influences. The two most common sources of crime are failure of self-control and violations of interpersonal boundaries. The desire to avoid committing crimes can be said to be one of the most important and powerful motivators of moral behavior.

Religion can be defined as institutions and processes that make the social world understandable and bind individuals to the social order with strong ties. Common sense argues that religious ties should lead to lower crime rates. The theoretical foundations of this inverse relationship can be traced back to Durkheim's (1915) theory of social integration, concerning the social roots of religion and its place in society. Durkheim argued that religion is inseparable from the social order, playing a crucial role in legitimizing and reinforcing the values and norms of society. Religions provide certain rewards. Religious people expect to gain more benefit from engaging in accepted behaviors than non-religious people, and the harm that social deviance or crime would bring is greater for them. In this sense, avoiding punishment and seeking reward leads religious people to deviate or commit crimes less than non-religious people. This effect occurs in several ways: First, religion generally shares the same values as many in society as a whole. Therefore, religiously inclined people have strong ties to values that reject social deviance. Second, religion offers this otherworldly hope of punishment and reward. Third, religious institutions produce religious networks. These networks offer rewarding social relationships, and these relationships can be jeopardized by deviant behavior.

In line with these views, a review and meta-analysis of 60 studies published between 1967 and 1998 concluded that religious beliefs and practices generally show a moderately negative association with criminal behavior (Hood et al., 2009, p. 399). Drawing clear conclusions from studies conducted in Türkiye on the relationship between İslam and social deviance, including whether

such a relationship exists and, if so, its direction, appears to be difficult. To illustrate this, a few examples are provided below:

The first and most comprehensive study on crime in Türkiye, conducted by the Istanbul University Institute of Turkish Criminology, was carried out between 1946-47 through face-to-face interviews with 974 juvenile delinquents. The study found that religious children tended to commit less theft but were more likely to engage in various other offenses. There was little difference between religious and less religious children in crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, and “other” offenses. Overall, the data shows that while 53.2% of those with weak faith committed crimes, this rate was 46.8% for those with strong faith. This suggests that religion does have an influence on crime, but it is a weak one.

Using cross-sectional data from the World Value Survey conducted in 1990-1991. Categories identified as social deviant behaviors included buying known stolen goods, accidentally hitting a parked vehicle and failing to report the damage, and using marijuana or hashish. Ultimately, a negative (decreasing) correlation was found between buying stolen goods, failing to report damage from an accidental collision, and using marijuana or hashish as the importance of God in a person's life increased (Stark, 2001).

In the semi-open prisons of Ordu and Giresun (1986), the vast majority of those who committed crimes (73.7%) knew that the crime they committed was a sin, but they were forced to commit it, that they had no other choice (47%), that they did not think they would be held accountable for their actions because they were not in the wrong (21.8%), and that although the crime itself was a sin, they would actually receive merit because they were not in the wrong (8.61%). Those who did not consider the crime they committed to be a sin also did not believe that the crime they committed was a sin because they were not in the wrong (55%), that they did not commit a sin by doing this act but rather fulfilled justice (15%), and that they took revenge for an injustice (17.5%). Those who firmly believed in God before committing the crime (83.5%) and those who accepted that those who obeyed God's commands and did good deeds in this world would go to Paradise after death, and those who did not obey God's commands and did bad deeds would go to Hell (82%) constituted the vast majority. In addition, it was determined that 13.7% of criminals performed the five daily prayers, 22.3% performed Friday and Eid prayers, and 56.2% fasted continuously during Ramadan. It was found that those who committed crimes such as theft, robbery, rape, sodomy, and drug use had weaker faith in God, showed indifference towards religion, and while they largely did not perform religious rituals, they engaged in religiously forbidden behaviors at a high rate compared to other criminals. The findings indicate that those who committed particularly shameful crimes had low rates of faith and worship, while their rates of engaging in religiously forbidden behaviors were high. This leads the researcher to conclude that there is an inverse relationship between religious devotion and especially shameful crimes (Peker, 1990).

A significant finding of a recent study on university students is the lack of a substantial influence of religious factors on deviant behavior. The student's religiosity only had a negative effect on one deviant behavior (alcohol consumption). This seems to support the assumption (claim) in Western literature that religion is more effective in “victimless crimes.” This limited information suggests that religion influences deviant behavior both positively and negatively. In conclusion, based on the available findings, it is stated that religion has no or a very weak role in preventing deviant behavior (Özbay, 2007).

A recent study of a group of inmates in prison found that most criminals did not consider themselves religious and also exhibited negative characteristics in terms of the religiosity variables examined. This negative perception was observed more intensely in criminals who had been in and out of prison multiple times. Based on the findings of this research, the researcher shares the following opinion: It can be said that religiosity is one of the factors that prevents crime, that a large proportion of criminals consist of non-religious individuals, and therefore, religiosity can be considered as an important variable in criminality analysis. Similarly, it can be argued that as individuals' level of participation in the religious sphere or their level of religiosity increases, their likelihood of engaging in antisocial and criminal behavior decreases (Kızmaz, 2010).

A study conducted on female prisoners revealed no difference in religious beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors between female prisoners and individuals who had not committed crimes. Accordingly, when female prisoners involved in crimes were asked about their religiosity, 37.5% of participants described themselves as “very religious,” and 32.9% as “religious.” In other words, 70.4% of female prisoners categorized themselves as religious/very religious (Kenevir, 2015). In another study by the same researcher, female prisoners who defined their crime as a matter of honor did not see their actions as contradicting their religiosity. However, religion appears to be a legitimizing factor rather than a triggering factor in the crime committed (Kenevir, 2017).

Values and Religiosity

Value is something desirable, interesting, and needed. The importance of value increases according to the intensity of the desire for it. The concept of value expresses not “what has been,” but “what ought to be.” In this sense, the concept of value, which has a more practical/applied character than a theoretical one, can be said to be one of the conditions of human existence. Humans create their values as a result of the relationships they establish with other beings. Values reflect desires, wishes, and preferences; they include important concepts and ideas for the individual, thoughts or beliefs about what is right, appropriate, and desirable. In this sense, values are beliefs about whether something is desirable (good) or undesirable (bad). Values are desired goals that guide, direct, and act as rules for individuals' lives, with varying degrees of importance. Values are fundamental cultural elements that guide individuals' behavior, evaluations, and attitudes.

The concept of individual values describes ideals and the elements that an individual considers important in their life. Values influence all aspects of life and attitudes, principles, and things that

are valuable to them. Values are also integrated with individuals' worldviews and determine their priorities. Therefore, many social scientists believe that values are fundamentally important in explaining human behavior. Values are very deep psychological constructs that show individuals' preferences in critical situations and events. In this sense, values interact with many different psychological and cultural elements. These elements include attitudes, beliefs, norms, ideologies, assumptions, desires, interests, and needs. One concept that may be related to values is religion and religiosity.

A value system is formed by the values that determine how a person behaves in certain situations. For a value system to be emotionally harmonious and logically consistent, it needs a regulating, integrating source. One of the most important sources of these resources is religion. Theoretically, religion and values are quite related. Although religion cannot be reduced to a set of moral values and rules, values constitute a significant part of every religion. Interest in this relationship is increasing day by day and continues intensely today. As religion is transmitted through generations, so too is the transmission of values. Religions encourage their followers to follow certain value perspectives. Therefore, many people generally find certain value priorities in religion. Thus, religion appears as a special value domain. In this domain, a deep, comprehensive, and sacred evaluation takes place. A person who adopts this style of evaluation willingly connects with and submits to a transcendent and sacred creator and regulates their life according to His will. Therefore, a religious person acts under the influence of their religious beliefs to justify all their actions. Religion serves as a source for rules of conduct and social structure, thus ensuring the acceptance of social norms. Religion is as influential on the social environment as a powerful social movement. In this sense, religion is one of the important sources of values.

At the psychological level, values refer to the investigation of the relationship between religious commitment and religious attitudes, which we theoretically refer to as religiosity on the one hand, and the individual's personal value orientation on the other. In the long history of research on the relationship between religion and values, it has been determined that individual values are influenced by religion. Schwartz and Huisman showed that there is a theoretically significant set of commonalities between religious commitment and a set of values in some individuals belonging to four different denominations or religions: Judaism, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Greek Orthodoxy (Duriez et al., 2003). In these studies, the variation of individual values according to religious groups is understood as indicating a relationship between religion and values. Research results using both previous value approaches and Schwartz's value approach regarding the religiosity-value relationship have revealed that people at different levels of religiosity are generally guided by different value orientations. Accordingly, religious people; It is observed that people support values representing conservatism, respect for authority, and adherence to social norms (Traditionalism, Conformity), and self-transcendence, manifested through concern for protecting and enhancing the well-being of close individuals (Benevolence); they place higher importance on values expressing motivation towards avoiding uncertainty; and conversely, they attribute lower

importance to values expressing motivation towards independent thought and action and the pursuit of sensual pleasure-seeking (hedonistic) desires (Stimulation, Hedonism, Self-Direction) (Duriez et al., 2003). Research conducted in our country has generally yielded results parallel to this pattern (Mehmedoğlu, 2013).

A study on the value orientations of Turkish teachers showed that religious orientation exhibited the highest positive correlation with Tradition, Conformity, and Security, while the highest negative correlation was observed with Universalism, Self-Direction, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, and Stimulation (Kağıtçıbaşı & Kuşdil, 2000).

A study examining the relationship between the political and religious preferences and life values of Turkish prospective leaders revealed that those who define themselves as “very religious” consider Benevolence, Tradition, Security, and Achievement to be more important than Hedonism and Universalism in guiding their lives. Those who position themselves between the very religious and the non-religious, however, find Power, Security, Conformity, and Tradition to be more important (Atay, 2003).

It has been found that there are significant positive correlations between religiosity and Tradition, Benevolence, and Conformity, and significant negative correlations between religiosity and Hedonism, Stimulation, Power, and Self-Direction (Mehmedoğlu, 2006). Similar results were obtained in two separate studies conducted on students of the Faculty of Theology (Mehmedoğlu, 2006/1; Kızılgeçit et al., 2015).

Pro-Social Behavior and Religiosity

Prosocial behavior can be defined as voluntary activities intentionally undertaken to help another person or group. It is the act of helping another without expecting any form of reward. In other words, it refers to behaviors (helping, donating, cooperation, volunteering, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, etc.) that a person exhibits voluntarily and without coercion, for the benefit of another person or group. Prosocial behaviors are also defined as a positive aspect of moral development and as the opposite of antisocial behaviors. Encompassing behaviors such as helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating, prosocial behaviors are also called “altruistic behaviors.” The moral reasons for a positive social or altruistic personality can be said to include empathetic concern, the ability to see others' perspectives, and acceptability. At the core of prosocial behavior lies altruism and helping others, organizational citizenship behavior, empathy, charity, volunteering, and cooperation.

What motivates people to engage in selfish or other-oriented behavior? For example, in social situations like finding a wallet in the middle of the street, a person has two options: to act in their own self-interest by taking the wallet, or to act in the interest of others by returning the wallet to its rightful owner. In the social sciences, this first type of behavior is referred to as selfish (egoistic), and the second as prosocial behavior. As in other disciplines, social psychology may also have different terms describing the same or similar behaviors. One of these, altruism, can be defined as helping

others that involves costs not offset by any reward. Cooperation occurs when two or more individuals help each other to achieve the same goal. Because it is other-oriented rather than self-oriented or selfish, altruism represents the hidden and valuable quality of the motivation for prosocial behavior. The principles and emotions of prosocial behavior are intertwined. Structurally, prosocial behavior incorporates compassion and compassionate love. Compassionate love refers to excessively selfless tendencies (other-oriented feelings, beliefs, and behaviors) that are conscious, well-motivated, and thoughtful. Compassionate love includes (a) mercy towards those who suffer and (b) a passionate commitment to the progress of other people, and indeed all of humanity.

Religious doctrine and rituals can serve as a breeding ground for prosocial behavior. Positive social behavior is the aim of religiosity. On the other hand, almost all classical theorists (James, Freud, Skinner, Erikson, and Allport) and contemporary evolutionary scientists emphasize the positive link between religion and altruism. In recent years, a growing body of evidence has shown that religious people (instinctive religion, beliefs, and practices) perceive themselves as prosocial behaviorists. Indeed, religious people place great value on charity, justice, and care, moral principles, and also noble emotions such as empathy, compassion, and love. In fact, altruism, care, and justice—the interpersonal dimension of morality—are not the only moral concerns of religion. Religion is also concerned with rules of honor, loyalty, and dominion, imposing obligations and duties on higher institutions, society, and oneself. Morality concerning sexuality and honor is far more strongly tied to religion than to interpersonal morality. Interestingly, these prosocial behavioral traits, values, or emotional tendencies are prevalent not only among Christians (much of the work in the psychology of religion comes from there) but also among Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims. Prosocial behaviorism appears to be a key characteristic of the religious personality and one of its likely generalities. Religious people see themselves, and are seen by others, as people who, in addition to social conformity, evaluate, feel, live, and think in a way that considers the interests and needs of others. Religious people are prosocial because they empathize (i.e., tend to understand the thoughts and share the feelings of others) and/or because honesty and openness are important to them, and they respect social norms. The connection between religion and positive social behavior appears to be very closely related to the ability to empathize, to think deeply, and/or to be honest (Saroglou, 2006).

Religious people value conformity in interpersonal relationships, need social approval, and support being within the group in the face of external obstacles. Therefore, religious individuals are compelled to exhibit prosocial behavior towards relatives, acquaintances, and those with whom they have close relationships and whose judgments they value. However, research shows that this behavior is limited to within-group and familiar individuals, and not universal enough to extend to strangers who threaten religious values. Less prosocial behavior is exhibited towards strangers who have little or no chance of reciprocation. Secondly, they exhibit protective prosocial behavior in critical moments of life—but certainly not towards those who threaten their religious values, such as members of the group outside of it. Mutual assistance, solidarity, forgiveness, and other

interpersonal prosocial behaviors have been the focus of psychological research on prosocial behaviorism.

Prosocial behaviorism exists not only in the minds of religious people but also as a key component of their personality, desires, values, moral principles, and emotions. Religious prosocial behaviorism is often observed to be encouraged in relation to positive self-image, social respect, and reciprocity. In turn, religion can motivate prosocial behaviors – even subconscious ones – and foster altruism in a highly universal way (e.g., among both religious and non-religious individuals). Evidence of the existence of devotedly altruistic behaviors is found in the lives of heroes and saints, and, among other things, is encouraged for religious reasons. Different perspectives on religion are linked to varying levels of processes, both individual and collective, ranging from altruism-based kinship to developed cultural altruism. Research shows that, on average, non-believers score lower on prosocial behavior personality tendencies than believers. A significant psychological impact of altruism in a religious environment is that prosocial behavioral approaches and behaviors contribute to the good of what is effective.

Among Belgian students, religiosity was positively associated with the intention to help relatives and close friends but not entirely linked to the willingness to help unknown targets in the same situations. Similarly, among Polish students, religiosity predicted willingness to help friends in need but had no association with willingness to help unknown individuals in the same need. Another study showed that Polish religious students were willing to help an exam-passing alliance but not a feminist ally (Saroglou, 2013).

A study conducted on Imam-Hatip High School students in our country revealed that the participating students exhibited a level of prosocial behavior that was above average and could be considered high. However, the level of prosocial behavior among the students did not reach a very high value. It was found that female students had a higher level of prosocial behavior than male students. The study also determined that memorization of the Quran was another important variable affecting the prosocial behavior levels of Imam-Hatip high school students; in this context, students who had memorized the Quran had a higher level of prosocial behavior than those who had not (Çekin 2013).

It is generally accepted that empathy plays a significant role in the emotional foundation of prosocial behavior. Empathic concern refers to a person's being caring, compassionate, selfless, and above all, loving towards others. Helping behavior also appears to be largely dependent on empathizing with others. Studies investigating the relationship between empathy and religiosity, both in the West (Watson et al., 1984) and in our country (Ayten, 2010; Özcan, 2016), have generally found a positive correlation between the two. In particular, individuals with instinctive religiosity tend to have a strong inclination to understand and help others. People with high levels of religious belief and worship exhibit an altruistic orientation, aware that “sharing the suffering of others” is a religious duty. Furthermore, research on donations to charitable organizations shows that religiosity, altruism, and empathy have a positive influence on the behavior of making covert donations.

Individuals motivated by altruism try to understand the plight of those in need and act in their best interest (Tiltay & Torlak, 2015).

Forgiveness and Religiosity

Forgiveness can be defined as the ability to view the wrongdoer with compassion, kindness, and love when a transgression occurs, and to voluntarily relinquish negative behaviors such as resentment, hurt feelings, or revenge. When someone forgives a person who has wronged them, the negative feelings they previously harbored towards the offender are replaced by positive and love-based emotions (empathy, compassion, sympathy, kindness, etc.). True forgiveness is voluntary, unconditional, and an active process. This type of forgiveness can transform both the forgiver and the forgiven. Individuals have experienced forgiveness, especially when they are less motivated to flee from the offender and seek revenge, and when they spontaneously become more compassionate towards the offender.

Refusing to forgive and persisting in that refusal is a form of harboring resentment. Forgiveness doesn't involve completely forgetting the offense or acting as if it never happened. However, overcoming hatred and relinquishing the desire for revenge is essential. The perpetrator remains guilty, and the offense remains an offense. Forgiveness involves a reduction in resentment and hatred, and a shift towards positive feelings and motivation towards the offender. Ultimately, negative emotions are replaced by positive ones, and the individual develops hope for “more positive developments.

All major religions have teachings that encourage forgiveness. Religious systems view forgiveness as a moral value and instruct their followers accordingly. Instructions to this effect are found in holy books and prophetic teachings. Furthermore, they sanctify forgiveness by presenting role models for the act of forgiving (e.g., the forgiveness of Joseph's brothers, the Prophet Muhammad's forgiveness of Wahshi, the killer of his uncle) and by offering a worldview that enables individuals to interpret events and relationships in a way that facilitates forgiveness. In this context, religion is an institution that instills feelings, thoughts, and behaviors related to forgiveness in people. But at the same time, individuals' choices regarding forgiveness also lead them to reshape their religious beliefs. Psychologists, therefore, focus on the potential of forgiveness to change an individual's perspective on life as a whole.

For many people from different cultures and beliefs, forgiveness is a deeply religious concept. Issues prevalent in many religions and cultures, such as crime, mistake, sin, repentance, reconciliation, peace, salvation, and atonement, at least indirectly draw our attention to the problems of forgiveness and its place in the lives of individuals and societies. A person who asks God for forgiveness for their shortcomings believes that they are making a new beginning in their relationship with God. Similarly, when a person asks for forgiveness from someone they have hurt or forgives someone who has upset them, they create a new opportunity for the relationship to heal.

Therefore, forgiveness has emerged as an important topic in the studies of the psychology of religion in recent years.

Psychological research conducted over the past fifty years has consistently shown a positive correlation between religious commitment and the tendency to forgive others. Studies have shown that those who are highly religious, compared to those who are not, have a greater motivation to forgive, are more inclined to take individual responsibility for their wrongdoings and to make amends, make greater efforts to forgive, and are less inclined to hold grudges against those who have wronged them (McCullough et al., 2013). Accordingly, those with a high degree of intrinsic religious orientation are more inclined than those without to feel guilt for their mistakes, to confess and feel good after confession, to forgive themselves, and to believe they have been forgiven by God. It suggests that when intrinsically religious individuals harm others, instead of resorting to absolute religious solutions such as seeking forgiveness only from God, they are more inclined to use interpersonal solutions (e.g., confession, seeking forgiveness from the wronged party, etc.), and that these solutions provide more robust psychological and interpersonal benefits. Some findings from these studies have led to the following conclusions. Focusing on contemplating one's harmful behavior can lead to feelings of divine forgiveness, while reducing the likelihood of seeking forgiveness between individuals. Conversely, concentrating on how to repair the damaged relationship increases the tendency to directly ask for forgiveness from the victim.

Religion has been shown to have some beneficial effects on health and well-being because it encourages people to forgive in their relationships with friends and family. The tendency to forgive among religious people is seen as one of the mechanisms that provide them with positive health benefits. Conversely, it has been noted that persistent refusal to forgive a criminal can harm physical health, particularly increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease (McCullough et al., 2013, p. 231). A study conducted in our country revealed that with an increase in religiosity, characterized by feelings of closeness to God, referencing religious commandments in solving social problems, honesty, performing acts of worship such as fasting and prayer, reading the Quran, and possessing a level of religious knowledge, the tendency to forgive someone who has wronged them increases, with individuals "understanding them, believing they can correct their mistake, and investigating the root cause of the problem. Conversely, the tendency to seek revenge decreases, with individuals avoiding the offender, not trusting them, maintaining distance, reviewing their relationship, being dissatisfied with them, making them pay for their actions, retaliating in kind, cursing them, and wishing them harm and suffering (Ayten, 2009/2). Another study showed that general religiosity did not have a significant effect on forgiveness tendencies. However, it was found that the religious knowledge and practice/application dimensions of religiosity had a positive and significant impact on the general tendency to forgive, forgiving others, and forgiving specific situations. It has been found that there is a negative relationship between the "Utilitarian-Defensive Orientation" dimension of religiosity and general forgiveness, and that it has a significant effect on general forgiveness. In conclusion, it can be said that religiosity helps suppress feelings of hatred, revenge, and anger, can be effective in

fostering optimistic feelings towards others, and plays an important role in reducing the tendency to seek revenge and increasing the tendency to forgive (Uysal, 2015).

Work, Profession, Work Ethic, and Religiosity

Job commitment is a concept largely revealed by productivity-focused research. It summarizes an employee's respect for the service they provide, the ethical level they exhibit while doing their job, and their sense of responsibility for any potential harm arising from the results of their work. Therefore, regardless of the nature of the job, the employee's contribution to the work, personnel opinions about the job, and the service to be provided, the knowledge that the individual will maintain their duties with similar commitment are the main factors in job commitment. Maintaining a consistently high level of job commitment among public officials is extremely important for the efficiency of public services.

Many variables influence job commitment. A study conducted in our country showed the highest correlation between religiosity and job commitment. Considering variables common to all faiths, such as believing in a god, regularly attending prayers, and visiting places of worship, there is a positive relationship between religiosity and job commitment in public institutions. Accordingly, public employees with more religious feelings and behaviors will exhibit a more committed workplace performance (Şahin & Şahin, 2016).

Marketing ethics has gained importance worldwide in recent years, thanks to increasingly conscious consumers. Because the activities of the marketing department are more clearly visible to consumers than other business activities, harsh consumer criticism often stems from these activities. Therefore, businesses must prioritize marketing ethics and avoid actions that consumers might perceive as unethical. In other words, businesses must meet consumers' expectations of honesty to acquire loyal customers. Business owners are at the forefront of those who must meet these consumer expectations. Their ethical or unethical behavior serves as a guide for marketing managers and sales personnel. Academic studies on this subject show that when consumers perceive an ethical problem in any marketing action, they tend to be more inclined to buy the company and its products. It was concluded that their intentions were negatively affected.

Religiosity has been a significant variable in marketing research, particularly over the last 30 years. The Hunt - Vitell model is one of the most notable models developed in the field of marketing ethics. In this model, religiosity is among the individual factors considered to influence ethical behavior. A study conducted in Türkiye found that the level of religiosity of small business owners affected their perceived level of ethical problems, but no evidence was found that the level of religiosity affected ethical intentions. Based on this, it can be said that more religious individuals perceive higher levels of ethical problems. While a direct effect between religiosity level and ethical intentions could not be detected, an indirect effect through perceived ethical problems is possible. When the research results are evaluated, it can be said that religiosity, idealism, perceived ethical problems, and ethical intentions have a linear relationship (Özbek & Özer, 2012). A similar study

conducted on business administration students also found that the level of religiosity positively affected ethical intentions. The behavioral dimension of religiosity appears to have a positive effect on ethical intentions. This result, specific to this research, shows that more religious individuals have a lower intention to commit unethical acts, and individuals with a higher behavioral dimension of religiosity have higher levels of ethical intentions.

The findings indicate that, within the specific research sample, more religious individuals avoid actions that harm others more, refrain from intentionally harming another person, and believe that causing physical or psychological harm to another person is not right, regardless of the reason. Furthermore, this finding supports the expectation that less religious individuals would consider the morality of an action to be determined not by adherence to rules, but by the positive outcomes (Özbek & Özer, 2013).

Consumer ethics is defined as moral principles and standards that guide the behavior of individuals or groups in fulfilling their obligations regarding the use of goods and services and the disposal of their waste. The influence of religious values on consumer behavior is a known fact. Studies on consumer ethics have shown that religious values are one of the factors determining consumer ethics. Another concept that is thought to be related to consumer ethics is materialism, which is the subject of research within marketing science. The incompatibility of excessive materialistic tendencies with religious values has been debated for a long time, and research indicates a negative relationship between religious values and materialism. In a study conducted in our country on this subject, it was revealed that there are relationships between the sub-dimensions of consumer ethics and intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. It was understood that intrinsic religiosity shows a negative relationship with actions that can be considered negative in consumer ethics, while extrinsic religiosity shows a positive relationship with such actions. According to the results of this research, it can be said that intrinsic religiosity is more decisive than extrinsic religiosity in the moral behavior patterns of consumers. Research data revealed a positive correlation between materialistic tendencies and external religious values. Individuals' perception of religious values as a means to an end, within the context of external religiosity, can play a role in terms of possession.

Religiousness influences marketing activities. Religious traditions and institutions can affect trade rules, prohibit certain products, or influence the timing and location of marketing. The factors consumers consider when choosing a brand are diverse, and sometimes consumers themselves are unaware of them. Studies have shown that the level of brand loyalty among those who identify as religious varies according to their religious teachings. Some researchers argue that religious commitment can extend to brand loyalty. One reason why religiosity is important for marketing and other social sciences is that individuals use this concept to define themselves and simultaneously form a social group with its own rules, norms, perceptions, and values. The impact of religiosity on the social value system and the influence of these values on consumer behavior are significant. Research has shown that consumers often make decisions based on their religious beliefs rather than on what will provide them with the greatest economic benefit. Numerous studies to date have

found a significant relationship between religiosity and consumer purchasing behavior. In other words, brand preference and purchasing behavior can change depending on a person's level of religiosity. Therefore, in terms of consumer behavior, the phenomenon of religiosity varies depending on the commandments, references, and products associated with that religion. A study conducted in our country also showed results consistent with these assessments. According to the participants, a significant relationship was found between the degree of religiosity and/or frequency of worship, the extent to which television advertisements influence purchasing decisions, the extent to which information about the country of origin of the brand influences purchasing decisions, and the degree to which the preferred brand is defensive (Çubukçuoğlu & Haşiloğlu, 2012).

Conclusion

One of the main elements constituting a religious system is morality. From a religious perspective, which prescribes the regulation of human behavior according to certain rules at both individual and societal levels, “religiosity” and “morality” are inseparable. There are very strong links between religiosity and morality. Individuals or societies that embrace religion perceive observing moral rules in their choices and behaviors as an internal obligation. Therefore, when the moral element is lacking or insufficient, a person's religiosity is also problematic.

However, religion and morality remain separate fields. Morality is a way of life, a system of rules that an individual must follow to do what is good and right and to avoid what is bad. When a relationship is established between these two fields, God, who is the subject of our prayers and worship in religion, emerges as the ultimate source of reference to be considered in our moral choices. In this case, our religious beliefs play an active role in our moral choices, and moral values gain a new dimension when they receive the support of an absolute and sacred authority. Thus, a religious person interprets any event they encounter not only in terms of the predictions of their individual conscience or societal expectations, but also in terms of the commands of the sacred authority they believe in and are bound to. In this way, they add “sin” to “evil” and “merit” to “good” in their life. Thus, religious and moral feelings develop together in the individual, nourishing and supporting each other.

Religion clearly sets forth right and wrong. Religious texts, traditions, and customs offer many examples of morally upright individuals that people can admire, while also containing direct rules on how people should behave in their lives. For individuals who sincerely and wholeheartedly embrace religious beliefs and values, morality and values play a significant role in their judgments, behaviors, and attitudes. Conversely, the influence of moral values weakens in those who exhibit only outward religiosity. When moving from religious belief to morality, there isn't always complete harmony between them in influencing and changing people's personalities and behaviors. Moral shortcomings are also visible results and evidence of individuals' incomplete internalization of religion.

In today's capitalist and secular order, there is no clear distinction between what is good and beneficial for the individual and what is beneficial for society. Individualism and worldliness have come to the forefront in contemporary culture. A moral understanding based on pleasure, power, and self-interest has become widespread. However, traditionally, a distinct aim of religion and morality has been to limit the desires and wants of the self, to restrain the tendencies of people to express their individual desires and wants. Findings from multifaceted research show that religion still provides moral standards for many people today. However, this role of religion as a measure and rule-setter continues with some difficulties and confusion due to these cultural changes, and its influence on consciences is gradually diminishing.

Ethics Committee Approval

This study is a theoretical work and does not require ethics committee approval.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

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