An Investigation into the Relationship among Piety, Self-control, and Social Skills in High School Students*

Mahnaz Estaki
Assistant professor in Islamic Azad University Tehran Central Branch, Psychology department, Iran
P.esteki@gmail.com

Zohreh Sadeghi
M. A. in psychology and education of exceptional children, Islamic Azad University Tehran Central Branch, Iran
z_sadeghi1985@yahoo.com

Abstract

**Purpose:** religious beliefs can be considered as one of the anticipant factors in persons’ compatibility and social skills. As far as several researchers believe, religious beliefs influence both social control act which lessen anti-social behaviors and facilitating community that promote satisfactory relationships. To this end, this study made an attempt to investigate the relationship among piety, self-control and social skills in high school students.

**Methods and Materials:** a total number of 450 high school female students in Tehran was selected through convenience sampling. After filling the questionnaire which was about piety (Khodayarifard et al., 2013) and social skills rating scale (The Teenage Inventory of Social Skill, by Inderbitzen and Foster, 1992) as well as Rotter scale source by each participant, data was analyzed through regression, Spearman correlation test and U test.

**Findings:** The regression coefficients indicated that explaining students’ social skills is probable through their piety and self-control. It was also confirmed that piety and self-control can predict students’ social skills.

**Conclusion:** The results of the study demonstrated that there is a meaningful relationship among piety, social skills and self-control.

**Keywords:** Piety, Social Skills, Self-control, High School Students.

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Introduction

Changes follow-on from the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution in the Western countries offered new beliefs and points of view. Regarding these points of view, human being doesn’t need religion and it is not possible for him to experience religion, religious beliefs, and moral and spiritual values. Religion even is considered as an obstacle to improvement and just viewed from its substantial dimension. Furthermore, over the time, it was indicated that modern societies are just one-dimensional ones which ignore the basic aspect of human life which is the spiritual one. In other word, modernism was able to enhance concrete improvement and human being’s welfare, but reduced man’s peace on the other hand. Modernism also imposed some other undesirable issues such as confusion and alienation and spiritual crisis and crisis of knowledge on man. While history illustrates man’s nature of faithfulness. Religion is defined as an organized issue as well as a collection of customs and acts which determines human’s responses to his experiences in life (Zuling, et.al, 2006). Piety is also considered as one’s attempt to find sanctity. Most of the time, religion is of a mediator rule that affects persons’ daily activities as such some religious scholars believe, religious beliefs facilitate the way of facing social conditions and emotions (Hadianfar, 1384). As believed by some researchers, religious beliefs can be regarded as an anticipant factor in people’s compatibility and social skills. As such, Tomas and Carver (1990) claimed that religious beliefs are of two combined action in youth’s life, 1. Social control action which reduces antisocial behaviors. 2. Social facility that propagates satisfactory social relationships. Therefore, the relationship between religion and personality has always been attractive for several researchers. For example, Raya, et. al. (2008) indicated that religion leads to the sense of well-being between Muslims.

Religion enjoys an integrative nature which leads to increased humans’ empathy and social participation. According to Dorkim’s point of view, beliefs and rituals of the sacred religion is solidarity and social integration. As he put forwards, such beliefs and actions can unify all of the persons who follow them in a behavioral community and as believed by Cowzer (1377) religious customs strengthen people’s common integration through gathering them with each other. Worship and rituals, in fact, resulted in increasing people’s empathy and cooperation (Dorkim, 1383). Religion induces and recovers people’s heritage s and transfers its sustainable values to future generations (Kowzer, 1377) and also increases stability prevailing norms and values in people’s involvement and responsibility in societies. According to their experimental documents, Levin and Elison (1988) believe that people who take part in religious ceremony, especially within a group, regularly, enjoy a more extensive social relationship. These relationship and religious societies are, indeed, a channel for social and emotional supports and social assistance as empathy.

Self-control is regarded as one of the other depended factors to piety and can be defined as the intrapersonal struggle between passion and astute, recognition and motivation, and also between external programmer and external agent (in all these pair, the first one can conquest the second (Rachlin, 1995). In a vertical study conducted by Adabjaradottir And Rafnsson (2002) it was indicated that the students who have more antisocial behaviors are of less self-control and are exposed to dealing with drug and alcohol abuse. In other word, one should regard that religion
which is a comprehensive plan that consists of several guidance, included self-control. Since religion provides human with the lessons to control them from some amoral behaviors (smith, 2003). Therefore, the influence of piety on one’s self-control and try to avoid antisocial behaviors is apparent. It is also worth noting that there is a conflicting collection of results regarding control and piety. For example, Nesbon (1973, as cited in Koushki, et. al., 1389) found no relationship between religion and control, while Thalbourne (2007) pointed out that religion beliefs are able to be determined by psychological variables. Above all, believing in God also strengthen human beings and impart them to have a better one (God) in dealing with difficulties. They, indeed, accept as true that God’s sustenance provide them with a powerful hand to reach their goals. As stated by Schieman, et. al. (2005) this belief resulted in one’s self-control. Krause (2005) also found in his study that the old people who had a stronger believe in God, were more successful and satisfied in their lives. They also feel less stress in relation to some issues as death.

It can be said that as a world view, religion is not only a factor of one’s social and individual behaviors, but also is affective in developing his behavior. With its religious orders, religion strengthen faithful people’s will and help them to avoid deviation. It also disciplines one in the best way, as well. In as much as discipline is resulted from bond and commitment, a society can gain its security through discipline. On the other hand, the results of other domestic and foreign investigations indicated that religious beliefs are the determinant of students’ social skills. Goodarzi (1382) investigated the relationship between high school students’ orientation to piety and their social and individual features found that there is a negative and meaningful relationship between students’ piety and aggressiveness. Put it another way, the students who gained higher score in piety scale are of less aggressiveness and more social compatibility in comparison to control group. According to the mentioned issues, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship among piety, self-control and social skills in high school students.

Methods and Materials

This study is a descriptive (non-experimental) one. Participants of the study consist of a total number of 450 female students of Tehran’s 7th and 8th region who were selected through available samples (the method of the study). They also studied during 1392-1393 (from Ordibehesht to the end of the academic year. The following instruments were applied in order to measure research variable.

Piety questionnaire

This scale is the summarized form of a questionnaire made by Khodayarifard, et. al. (1389) which was reduced from 102 questions to 40 ones by him and his colleges. This questionnaire investigates piety view concerning 4 different parts included total piety, religious behavior, religious emotions, and religious beliefs. Besides, Cronbach Alfa ratio was reported as 92% for religious beliefs, 90% for religious behavior and 82% for religious emotions which are acceptable and adequate scales (Khodayarifard, et. al., 1389).
Social Skills Grading Scale
A questionnaire developed by Inderbitzen and Foster (1992) which included 39 five choices phrases was applied to measure students’ social skills. It is to note that the mentioned phrases ranged from *never applies* to *always apply*. The mentioned questionnaire was originally of 40 phrases which one of them (number 22) was omitted due to cultural reasons. The validity of the questionnaire was reported 90% by Inderbitzen and Foster (1992). The reliability, likewise, was examined through Cronbach Alfa and reported 80.71 for the positive part and 8.51 for the negative part of the questionnaire (Shiri, et. al, 1392).

Rotter Source of Control Scale
Rotter questionnaire was applied in order to investigate self-control. This questionnaire consists of 29 questions to evaluate individuals’ expectations and perception about the source of control. Cronbach Alfa scale was reported as 77% and 78% for the mentioned questionnaire (Asgharzade, 1383). It is to be said that, here, Rotter internal-external scale was used more than other scales. This scale includes 23 part and participants are to select one of the internal or external choices. Each external choices is of one score. So, the total score can ranged from 0 to 23 which the higher score indicated to be more external.

Data Collection
In order to collect the data, 12 schools (fit for girls, 6 from the 6th and 7th region and 6 from 8th region) were selected. After visiting each school and clearly explaining some points to the students, they were asked to answer to the questions truly. After filling all the three questionnaire, data was analyzed through SPSS.

Findings
In data analysis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied regarding the investigation of the degree of normality among variables. It is to me mentioned that several tests have been applied concerning research questions and hypothesis. As such, Regression, to test the main question of the study, Correlation Spearman to test the secondary question, and Correlation Spearman, Umann and whitney to test the research hypothesis, all with bearing in mind the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Research questions
Main question: is there any relationship among piety, self-control and social skills in female high school students?

Regression test was used in order to answer the mentioned question. According to the table below (Table 1), data analysis indicated a meaningful relationship among piety, self-control and social skills in female high school students. Besides, table 2 displays statistical explanation of self-control and piety in relation to social skills.
Table 1. Regression test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of the changes</th>
<th>Sum of the squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Average of the squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Level of meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression Remaining Sum</td>
<td>18717/801</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9358/901</td>
<td>15/074</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>277518/92</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>620/848</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>296236/72</td>
<td>449</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the above table and the level of meaningfulness, it seems promising to explain students’ social skills through their piety and self-control. Therefore there is a meaningful relationship among students’ social skills, their piety and self-control. Table 2 illustrates the exact quotient of the two mentioned variables.

Table 2. Regression quotient regarding piety and self-control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>factors</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Level of meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The constant amount</td>
<td>112/005</td>
<td>7/355</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>15/229</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piety</td>
<td>0/191</td>
<td>0/045</td>
<td>0/197</td>
<td>4/282</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>-1/175</td>
<td>382/0</td>
<td>141/0-</td>
<td>077/3-</td>
<td>01/0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is clear in table 2, beta scales (/197 and -0/141) indicated that piety is more explained and predicted for students’ social skills.

Graph 1. The relationship among piety, self-control and social skills

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: maharathareEjtemali
Secondary questions:

1. Is there any relationship between piety and social skill in relation to self-control type in female high school students?

To this end, the students were divided in two groups according to their self-control type. Table 3 displays the relationship between piety and social skill. Since these two variable were not parametric, spearman test was applied to perceive the plausible relationship.

Table 3. Relationship between piety and social skill in relation to internal and external self-control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Correlation type</th>
<th>R Correlation quotient</th>
<th>Correlation direction</th>
<th>R² quotient</th>
<th>Level of meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External self-control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piety</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/304</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal self-control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piety</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/133</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is clear from the above table, the obtained correlation (0/304) is meaningful in 0/01 level. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a meaningful relationship between piety and social skills of the students who have external self-control. It is also to be noted that regarding the positive direction of correlation, the increment of their social skills is depended and of related to their piety. Besides, $R^2$ quotient (9%) shows the predictability of their social skills with their piety.

This scale is not meaningful, so, it is not possible to expect a positive correlation between these two variables. The best answer to the mentioned is as hereunder:

There is a positive relationship between piety and social skills of the students who have external self-control, while there is a meaningful relationship between piety and social skills of the students who have internal self-control.

Secondary question 2:

Is there any relationship between piety and social skill in relation to self-control type in female high school students?
Table 4 illustrates the investigation of piety in relation to self-control (internal and external) in the participants. Since the mentioned variable (piety) didn’t enjoy normality, non-parametric U Mann Whitney was applied to do so.

Table 4. Difference of piety and social skills in relation to self-control type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Umann Whitney</th>
<th>Level of meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>piety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external self-control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal self-control</td>
<td>210/36</td>
<td>62055</td>
<td>18395</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external self-control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal self-control</td>
<td>218/62</td>
<td>64494</td>
<td>20834</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the above table and the obtained scores in Umann Whitney which is meaningful in level (1), it can be concluded that the average of piety scores is more in the student who enjoy internal self-control in comparison to those who have external self-control. In addition, regarding Umann Whitney scales, there is no difference between students’ social skills in relation to their self-control type.

Research hypothesis

1. There is relationship between piety emotions and social skills in relation to participants’ self-control type.

In this stage, the students were divided to two groups regarding their self-control type. Table 5 shows the results of the analysis which has be done to discern the relationship between piety emotion and social skills. Additionally, spearman correlation was applied due to the existence of these two nonparametric variables.

Table 5. Relationship between piety and social skills with external and internal self-control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Correlation type</th>
<th>R Correlation quotient</th>
<th>Correlation direction</th>
<th>R2 quotient</th>
<th>Level of meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>external self-control Piety emotions</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/408</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal self-control Piety emotions</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/223</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Religious</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/237</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 self-control</td>
<td>beliefs</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/058</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal self-control</td>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externa l self-control</td>
<td>Religious behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/153</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal self-control</td>
<td>Religious behaviors</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>spearman</td>
<td>0/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding table 5 and correlation scales (0/408) and (0/223) which are meaningful in level 0/01, it can be decided that there is a meaningful relationship between piety emotions and social skills of the students who have external and internal self-control.

In addition, the positive correlation direction indicated the boost students’ social skills along with their increased piety emotions. R2 quotient of external self-control confirms that 16% of their social skills is predictable with their piety emotions. Likewise, R2 quotient of internal self-control approves that 16% of their social skills is expectable with their piety emotions.

2. There is relationship between piety beliefs and social skills in relation to participants’ self-control type.

Here again, the students were divided to two groups regarding their self-control type. Table 5 displays the relationship between two mentioned variables. Concerning table 5, correlation reported as (0/237) and is meaningful at level 1. As a result, there is a meaningful relationship between religious beliefs and social skills of the students who have external self-control. Moreover, regarding correlation direction, it can be resulted that the incensement of students’ social skills is contingent upon their religious beliefs. R2 quotient of commends that 5% of their social skills is expectable with their religious beliefs. Since the obtained score is not meaningful, it is not conceivable to find a meaningful correlation between the two variables. To answer the second hypothesis, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between religious beliefs and social skills of the students who have external self-control. Despite the fact, no relationship was found between religious beliefs and social skills of the students who have internal self-control.

3. There is relationship between religious behavior and social skills in relation to participants’ self-control type.

The students were divided to two groups regarding their self-control type. Table 5 exhibited the relationship between religious behaviors and social skills. In as much as the obtained score is not meaningful in each table, no meaningful correlation can be found between the two variables. So, it can be said that there is no meaningful relationship between religious behavior and social skills in relation to external and internal self-control.
Conclusion

According to the findings, it was determined that there relationship between students’ piety and self-control in relation to their social skills. The current result is in line with kushki and khalilifar’s (1389) study, in which they investigate the role of religious view to predict students’ source of control and also khodayarifar, et. al. (1388) that scrutinize the relationship between religious view and self-control in drug using case. Religious, as a comprehensive system, consists of several plans to lead human and provide him with some behavioral rules to persuade him to do appreciable acts and avoid improper behaviors (Smith, 2003, as cited in Khodayarifar, et al., 1388). On the other hand, self-control is considered as a vital issue in order to social welfare which let people to have suitable choices in their behaviors and emotions. This conceptual skill strengthen people in dealing with different situations and critical circumstance of decision making. Above and beyond, the results of the study also indicates that the average of self-control in the students who had internal self-control is meaningfully more than that of those who enjoy external self-control. This point us in agreement with the results of kushki and khalilifar (1389) Rasmussen and Charman (1995). As a matter of fact, the source of internal self-control can promote as one’s cognitive-emotional perception of religion upholds. Fiori, et. al. (2006) also found that the source of mediator self-control is related to the degree of piety and the feel of satisfaction from life.

The results of the study correspondingly shows that there is a positive relationship between religious belief and social skills of the female students who possess external self-control, whereas no meaningful relationship was found between religious belief and social skills of the female students who own internal self-control. In addition, it should be noted that one of the other factors which is influenced by religious belief is self-esteem. Self-esteem is one’s confidence to his abilities in thinking and deal with challenges. Maslow (1967) perceives self-esteem as the satisfied sense of qualification, ability, competence, confidence and liberty which lead a person to have a desirable feeling about his life. Otherwise, he fell dumped. Therefore, piety has always reinforce ones’ self-esteem and courage.

The results of the current study also shows that there is no meaningful relationship between religious behavior and social skills of the female students who possess external or internal self-control. Here, it is to distinguish religious behavior and religious emotions in teenagers. Bearing in mind that there is no relationship between teen’s ability in religious behavior and religious emotions and social skills.

Above all, one of the aims of religious training is to promote one’s religious behavior and religious emotions. But in our society, this point is so prominent to be modified. Indeed, religious behavior without religious emotions cannot be so practical for individuals, especially teens. This matter that is resulted from some environmental obligation or improper training may lead to personal and interpersonal conflict. Therefore, the lack of relationship between religious behavior and social skills is stem from the mentioned problem.

Consequences of the current study entirely indicate that piety, social skills and self-control is meaningfully related to each other in Tehran high schools female students. This finding
Can present religion as an effective factor in teenagers and youth’s accomplishment and protection in the present situation. It is noteworthy that providing people is initially done in family and schools and religious places belong a secondary role regarding this kind of training. Last but not least, it is to be noted that religious beliefs do possess an undeniable role in one’s thinking about life, his emotion with other people as well as the way of dealing with matters (Hogo and Du Zuleta, 1988).

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References


