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THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA FROM VIEWPOINT OF STUDENTS' INCLINATION

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ABSTRACT

Religious identity is one of the most important elements in developing social homogeneity and solidarity at society level and by developing sense of belonging to religion among society member, it has significant role in developing and formation of collective identity, in other term it carries out simulation and distinction operation. Since social media are working by contents, therefore it is necessary to address the impact of religious identity on social medias from viewpoint of students' inclination, because expansion of social medias at new era plays an effective role on sociability of students and redirection their approaches and value propensities.

Method: data collection tool in this descriptive study is a questionnaire with 20 closed questions that are completed by 200 students in different field in first half of the year.

Results: the findings showed that there is correlation between theoretical and emotional and practical commitment from viewpoint of students' inclination with social media and social media can influence students' inclination by determination coefficient of 0.52.

Keywords: Religious identity, social media, students' inclination

INTRODUCTION

Since a certain time providing the Islamic-Iranian pattern for development and progression is addressed by the country officials. One of the most important factors in developing Iranian-Islamic pattern of progress is attention to religious identity and identifying indexes and examining solutions for forming, fostering and stating its weakening factors within society. Religious identity is a phenomenon that can be achieved gradually and by following teachings of revelation, therefore for

forming a desirable identity during youth and adulthood, one should begin edification stages since early ages. Otherwise achieving to success in subsequent steps would be highly difficult. At the shadow of religious identity one can direct other identities such as professional, educational, social, family and national identities. Because the religion is the manner and plan of the life and one can crystallize other identities around it with thorough competence [1].

Religious identity is one of the most important elements in developing social homogeneity and solidarity at society level and by developing sense of belonging to religion among society member, it has significant role in developing and formation of collective identity, in other term it carries out simulation and distinction operation. For example Islam and Shiism brings about religious similarity within Iran society individuals and at the same time separates them from other religions. Contrary to other societies that attempt to marginalize the religion and eradicating religious people from the throne of power, in Iran society the religion has managed to bring about at least three thorough revolution. The first movements took place in 1501 by Safavids revolution based on Shiism, and the second movement occurred at 1906 by first ranked Shiite scholars' leadership within constitutional revolution and the last one happened with leadership and guidance of Shiite authority at 1979.

Currently increase of global communications and globalization lead in emerging a lot of cultural changes within various societies. Prevalence of different values, exposing to different thoughts and inclinations are among threatening components of sense of belonging to religion among young students.

Social media are working by contents, and users dynamically create and share them. Therefore there is a great social capital within social media and any media, organization or government seek to use this social capital. Social media currently can be considered as developer of changes at current time. It seems that these media tend to be replaced by collective media. Because the addressee within these Medias is not passive but users are producers of content [2]. Regarding personality formation in these ages as Ericsson argued the young people spend a time that is established upon the commitment and they acquire their sense of belonging to their society.

Within adolescence and youth ages and during sociability and acculturation, one internalize its own society values and norms, and on this basis they form their behaviors and thoughts now if during these ages some disturbance take place within procedure of internalizing religious values

and norms and youth fail to find a firm base for their religious behavior and thoughts, they would suffer from some kind of perplexity and confusion.

At current time regarding abundance of resources offering values and norms from one side and presenting different images from past culture and traditions from other side and encountering foreign thoughts, thus youth are facing many decision making paths and may incline toward subcultures or values inappropriate with their own society religious values and norms [3].

Though prevalence of revolution religious culture has no contradiction with west civilization, but the inherent contradiction between western mundane culture and Islamic culture urged the western policy-maker to defy with Islamic culture. The last method of West was cultural invasion to youth and making them without identity. Informing youth and adolescents and encouraging them to recognize their own religious identity is the best way to shelter against strong and lethal traumas of this invasion. By youth addressing to spirituality and consolidating religious identity in their soul and mind, not only they will be safe against these harms, but also they help the great Islamic society in religious culture promotion [4].

One of the most cultural objectives of imperialistic power is making youth generation away from religious identity. Invasive culture of West attempts to collapse belief and intellectual structure of young generation by using two features and weakness of youth (lack of experience and dominance of feelings on reason) through advertisement and psychological techniques.

Therefore in this manner they can empty youth from within and attract them to their own cultural basics and exert their own phony identity to them.

Currently the most significant tool used for implementing of this plan is vast usage of types of media. As social media and especially satellite channels and programs attempt to destroy religious identity of this generations, in contrary our native and national media should develop and structure various programs for introducing and consolidating religious identity to people, especially youth and adolescents.

If young generation finds a proper perception from its religious identity, it would find the power of analyzing and interpreting the cultural events and as a result, it can defy against cultural invasion and I could be turned into powerful and penetrating generation. Thus the necessity for attempting to introduce religious identity to youth especially students is revealed. Meanwhile educative authorities i.e. parents, educators, Medias and so on have crucial responsibility [5].

[6] states about repercussions of lack of successful identity finding within youth and adolescence age :" if we pay attention to consequences and repercussions and be aware of deepness of pain suffered by youth who lack identity, we find out the lack of identity is the root of significant part of depression, feeling of emptiness and absurdity" [6].

Therefore it is necessary to address the impact of religious identity within social medias from viewpoint of students' inclination because expansion of social medias at new era plays a pivotal role in process of sociability of students and redirecting their attitudes and value-related inclinations. Newspaper, magazines, books, cinema, television, radio, video, cassette tapes and currently satellite and transferring waves from different points of globe are among social media tools. These tools encompass great deal of addressees without development of personal relation between sender and receiver of the messages.

This type of sociability familiarize the individual with vast range of people that are known only indirectly such as athletic and historical figures, politicians, authors, journalists, announcers and T.V showmen, musicians and even ordinary people that are interviewed as a witness in news reports.

Social media teaches some material by introducing roles and viewpoints that people cannot access to them by other was.

Youth class (students) learn some materials about their future role as well as about high values and mundane values via advertisements.

Changes in norms and social values are reflected rapidly among groups and may be accepted easily by people that it was not possible by other ways, for example rapid prevalence of new inclinations in students' cultures mostly depends to Medias such as famous tapes, T.V, radio, youth magazines and cinema [6].

Based upon new and poststructuralist theories the identity is a created, temporary and acquisitive issue. Identity is a process that maintains or dismisses some discourses or certain identities [7]. Then youth's identity is not a constant and fixed issue and innovation in information and communication makes it possible for people around the world to access the main channels of information. In this regard, [8] points out a revolution that took place in the field of information and communication in the world and has influenced the life of all humans on the globe. This revolution relies on computer and has vast effects on economy, politics and culture. In other term from one side it has turned the information into a commercial and profitable commodity which its possession brings about power and from other side it has endurable effects on human personality and identity [8]. Change within different radio

and television channels, various internet websites, thousands of mass media and press, wall announce and advertisements, diverse magazines and books all are sign of cultural impact of social media [9]. Therefore in this research we used in general the symbolic interaction viewpoint regarding the inclination of students, because within social interaction that the individual gets through sociability, in fact it becomes familiar with its own society value and norms.

About changeability of identity, we rely on new and poststructuralist theory stating that the identity is a created, temporary and acquired (not determined). The identities are not absolute but they are relative. Any human becomes meaningful with relation to something else and the identity always is defined in the form of difference and is not something inherent for certain individual.

If young generation finds a proper perception from its religious identity, it would find the power of analyzing and interpreting the cultural events and as a result, it can defy against cultural invasion and it could be turned into powerful and penetrating generation. Thus the necessity for attempting to introduce religious identity to youth especially students is revealed. Meanwhile educative authorities i.e. parents, educators, Medias and so on have crucial responsibility. Thus this problem is posed which influences can

have the religious identity in social Medias from viewpoints of students' inclination?

❖ **Religious identity**

Among natural needs of human one can refer to tendency to love and worship. It means that the individual feels within itself tendency to worship and servitude for the God, without need for instruction. Manifestation of such sense and tendency is reveals within religious action and behavior. The religious identity from one side includes commitment of individuals to religion essence and religious values and from other side states society members' collective and public interest to religious rituals and establishments.

Also it encompasses practical dimension as well, including: contribution and practical inclination toward manifestations, rituals and religious ceremonies. In Iranian society a lot of element contribute in formation of people religious identity such as Koran, biography of prophets and imams, various prays, holy places such as shrines, mosques and religious rituals such as daily prays, fast, Haj, Khums and Zakat and rituals of Muharram and Ramadan.

Someone that its behavior and mannerism stems from revelation is characterized by religious identity. In other term, religious identity emerges after consolidation of human relation with Almighty God in human and acceptance divine dominance in human. After consolidation of religious

identity, the individual and social behaviors form according to religion ideas and objective [4].

❖ Social media

Social media is application of web-based technologies for turning communications into mutual dialogue. Social media is a type of interaction that uses a lot of communicative and expandable technics. The term "social media" was used for the first time around 2006. Chris Shipley (founder and director of global research of Guideword group) is often known as the first person who has used the modern term of social media. Shipley believes that social media is the pilot of future event for dialogue. It is an event that include blogging, wiki, forums and social networks. However there is no comprehensive and known universal definition for social media such as other definition of communication field. About definition of social media Brian Solis states, social media is consisted from democratic content and has a proper perception about people role. Because their role is not just reading and propagating information, but they produce information and share it with others. Also another definition explains that social media is description of online tools that people use them for sharing content, profiles, comments, opinions, their experience and thoughts. Therefore social media facilitates discourses and interaction between people.

These tools include blogs, podcast message panel, microblog, networks and wikis. Some experts introduce the definition of social media an alternative term for wen. They argue that social media with definition of web 2.0 is explanation of current generation of international websites in which Ajax RSS database are emerged for personal presentation, flexibility and web experience, Websites that are used by web 2.0 in depth of social interaction and formation of society and connecting common designs [10].

❖ Research objective

- ✓ Examining the impact of religious identity within social media from viewpoint of students' inclination

❖ Research hypothesis

- ✓ Social media influences on students' inclination to theoretical and emotional commitment to religion.
- ✓ Social media influences on students' inclination to practical commitment to religion.

❖ Research method

This research is practical by objective and is descriptive-correlational type by data collecting method. In practical research the results of research are used in decision making, policy making as well as planning.

For collecting information about the subject one has used questionnaire as well as library method for note taking from books, articles, documents and evidences available in universities. Therefore based on conducted researched some hypothesis is developed that after collecting data through questionnaire they are analyzed by SPSS software.

Statistical society of this research includes students of Tehran Shahid Beheshti University and number of 200 students is chosen as sample size by Cochran's formula. The sampling is carried out by random method.

❖ **Research findings**

✓ **Sample demographic analysis**

Among total of 200 student that responded to questionnaire, 91 students were male and 109 students were women, 176 persons were single and 24 persons were married. In term of age , most par were between 18 to 28 years old (71 %) and least part was dedicated to people older than 48 years (3.6 percent). Speaking of education, undergraduate degree 94 persons as the greatest group (47 percent) and M.A degree 76 persons, doctorate degree 20 persons and associate degree persons (0.5) that consisted the smallest part of the sample.

❖ **Testing hypothesis**

✓ Normality test

For examining normality of research variables distribution the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used. This test in single-sample mode compares observed accumulative distribution function with expected accumulative distribution in a variable at ordinal level of measurement. In other term in this test, distribution of a feature in a sample is compared whit the distribution that is assumed for that society. If the significance level is smaller than 0.05, then the observed distribution is different with expected distribution and the above distribution is not normal.

Table 1: Results of variables distribution normality test

Variables	Theoretical and emotional commitment to religion	Practical commitment to religion
Z	1.050	0.676
Significance level	0.210	0.263

In above table the significance level is greater than 0.05, then the variables distribution is normal.

❖ **Testing hypothesis**

First hypothesis:

✓ Social media influences on students' inclination toward theoretical and emotional commitment to religion.

H0: there is a correlation between social media and students' inclination toward theoretical and emotional commitment toward religion

H1: there is no correlation between social media and students' inclination toward theoretical and emotional commitment.

Table 2: Test of correlation between social media and students' inclination toward theoretical and emotional commitment to religion

variables	Dependent	Theoretical and emotional commitment to religion
	independent	
Test		Pearson
Amount		0.58
Significance value		0.000
number		200

Test results shows that there is correlation between two above variables (significance level is lower than 0.05) then hypothesis null is rejected and researcher's hypothesis is accepted. The intensity of relation is 0.58 implying a strong relation.

Second hypothesis:

✓ Social media influences on students inclination toward practical commitment to religion.

H0: there is a correlation between social media and students' inclination toward practical commitment to religion

H1: there is no correlation between social and students' inclination toward practical commitment to religion.

Table 3. Test of correlation between social media and students' inclination to practical commitment to religion

variables	Dependent	Practical commitment to religion
	independent	
Test		Pearson
Amount		0.61
Significance value		0.000
number		200

Test results show that there is correlation between two above variables (significance level is lower than 0.05). Therefore the hypothesis null is rejected and researcher's hypothesis is accepted. The intensity of relation is 0.61 that implies strong relation.

❖ **Regression analysis**

Now this question is answered that how much of dependence variable variance i.e. religious identity can be explained by the independent variable of social media. For achieving to this purpose the regression is used. The following table shows that these variables have undertaken 0.54 percent of whole of dependent variables variance.

Table 4: R^2 of research variables

Regression	correlation	Determination coefficient	Net determination coefficient
Enter	0.63	0.540	0.540

Table 5: ANOVA table

	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Squares mean	F	sig
regression	157.788	1	78.894	364.405	0.000
remnant	41.352	198	0.271		
Total	199.139	199			

Regression coefficient

Variables	B	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig
(constant)	0.340	0.169		2.005	0.000
Theoretical and emotional commitment to religion	0.206	0.70	0.180	2.634	0.000
Practical commitment to religion	0.401	0.78	0.360	4.638	0.00

For determining the impact of independent variable of social media the multivariable linear regression analysis is applied. The results have shown that the independent variable contributes 0.52 the variance of students' inclination. The results indicated that practical commitment to religion with Beta coefficient of 0.360 has the greatest impact on the inclination of students using social media. At first place the social media has the greatest impact on students' inclination in practical commitment to religion (with determinant of 0.401) and at next place the social media has the greatest effect on students' inclination in theoretical and emotional commitment to the religion (with Beta coefficient of 0.206).

CONCLUSION

Religious identity is one of the essential and fundamental components of identity of any person. Because anyone in defining itself express its religion too and defines itself with its religion, such as being Muslim, Christian, Jewish etc. therefore one we should perceive and recognize the user-based reality of social media. We should not neglect produced content of these Medias that reflect actual public thoughts, but we can benefit from this content with appropriate strategy and by observing ethical principle. So that everyone can be winner in this today global equation of media. This paper has attempted to fill the emptiness of research in the field of effect of religious identity in social Medias. At the first step one examine the reasons of students' inclination and effectiveness of religious identity in this media by survey study. Research categorization indicated that theoretical and emotional commitment to religion and practical commitment to religion from viewpoint of students' inclination have correlation with social media, and social media with determination coefficient of 0.52 can influence on students' inclination.

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