

# Religiosity and Prosocial Behaviour among Muslims: Mediating Role of Religious Values

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**Abstract:** Prosocial behavior constitutes an essential aspect of moral and social development, and religious traditions have long emphasized its importance among their followers. In Islam, social responsibility and service to humanity are regarded as core moral imperatives. Grounded within this framework, the present study examined the mediating role of religious values in the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior among Muslim youth. The sample consisted of 183 Muslim participants aged 22-35 years. Participants completed standardized psychological measures assessing religiosity, spiritual values, and the prosociality. Results of correlational analysis revealed significant positive relationships among religiosity, religious values, and prosocial behavior. Further, mediation analysis demonstrated that religious values significantly mediated the association between religiosity and prosocial behavior. The finding suggests that, within the Islamic context, faith-based values serve not only as guiding moral principles but also as motivational forces driving prosocial engagement.

**Keywords:** Religiosity, prosocial behavior, religious values, Islam, Muslim youth

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## 1 Introduction

Religion forms a fundamental moral framework in the lives of individuals, guiding both thought and behavior. It provides a system of values and moral principles that shape cognitive processes, emotional responses, and behavioral expressions. One of the most recognized outcomes of religious influence is the promotion of prosocial behavior- voluntary and intentional actions- such as helping, sharing, comforting, donating, expressing sympathy, and volunteering for the welfare of others, often at a personal cost (Penner et al., 2005; Bar-Tal, 1982; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998) (Zahn-Waxler & Smith, 1992; Penner et al., 2005). A growing body of evidence suggests that religiosity is positively related to prosocial tendencies (Stolz et al., 2013), e.g. social initiative and reducing antisocial behaviors such as substance use and delinquency. Moreover, some studies have demonstrated significant associations between subjective religiosity and various helping behaviors (Becker & Dhingra, 2001). The present study focuses particularly on internal religiosity / intrapersonal commitment, which refers to the in-

trapersonal dimension of faith expressed through beliefs, values, attitudes, motivations, and coping mechanisms operating within the mind of the individual (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Clary et al., 1998).

Religiosity as a subjective factor encompasses an individual's religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. It reflects the degree of commitment to one's faith and the extent to which religious principles are integrated into everyday life (Worthington, 1988). In Islam, religiosity represents a holistic commitment to the core tenets of the faith, encompassing both worship (ibadah) and social responsibility. According to Al-Goaib (2003), Islamic religiosity entails fulfilling the rights of God (huquq Allah) and the rights of people (huquq al-'ibad), adhering to divine commands, avoiding wrongdoings, and engaging in acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage.

Prosociality or helping behavior remains a central topic in psychosocial research due to its relevance for understanding developmental trajectories, psychological well-being, and interpersonal harmony (Batson & Powell, 2003; Pavey et al., 2012; Van Tongeren et al., 2016). While most world religions emphasize the

moral significance of prosocial conduct (Ahmed & Salas, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005) (Batson, Anderson, & Collins, 2005), empirical research has produced mixed findings. Some studies have reported positive association between religiosity and prosocial behavior (Bennett & Einolf, 2017; Ahmed, 2009; Hardy & Carlo, 2005) (Shah, 2004), whereas others have found no significant relationship (Annis, 1976; Eckel & Grossman, 2004; Sundeen & Raskoff, 1995; Darley & Batson, 1973). These inconsistent results suggest that the relationship between religiosity and prosociality is complex and potentially influenced by mediating or moderating variables (Ahmed & Salas, 2008; Saroglou et al., 2005).

Empirical studies among Muslim population have generally supported a positive link between religiosity and prosocial behavior. For instance, Duhaime (2015) found that religious salience in Morocco, measured through exposure to the Muslim call to prayer (adhan), was associated with increased charitable giving. Similarly, Kanekar & Merchant (2001) observed that Muslim participants in India were more likely to help others, when the need for assistance was perceived as unwarranted, and when the helper and the person in need did not like one another. French et al. (2013) reported that both parental and adolescent religiosity predicted prosocial behavior among Indonesian Muslim youth. Collectively, these findings affirm that Islamic religiosity is deeply connected to altruistic and socially beneficial conduct.

Another important construct in understanding the religion and prosociality relationship is religious values, which represent the moral and spiritual standards that guide human thought, judgment, and action (Rokych, 1973). Values are not external entities but are intertwined with behavior, serving as internal motivators that reflect what individuals believe to be right or meaningful. In Islam, such values include Rahamh (compassion), Taqwa (God-consciousness), Adl (Justice), Sadaqah (voluntary charity), etc. These are derived from divine revelation and provide a comprehensive ethical framework for daily living. The Qur'an explicitly integrates faith with moral action, emphasizing that true righteousness is manifested not by way of rituals alone, but through ethical conduct and social compassion. Qur'an says:

*“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy,*

*for the wayfarer, for those who ask; and for the freeing of captives; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-conscious”.* (Qur'an, 2:177)

Previous studies have found that religiosity often predicts prosocial outcomes such as charity, volunteerism, and helping behavior (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Saroglou et al., 2005; Einolf, 2011; Lam, 2002) (Perry et al., 2008). However, some research has shown that these effects occur only under specific conditions (Hunsberger & Platonow, 2001; Krause & Hayward, 2014; Sappington & Baker, 1995). Such findings suggest that religious values may serve as a critical mediating mechanism through which religiosity influences prosocial behavior.

## 2 Rationale of the Study

Although there is considerable evidence regarding positive association between religiosity and prosocial behavior, the precise pathway connecting the two remains underexplored particularly in non-Western Muslim majority context. Understanding how religious values operate as a psychological bridge between belief and behavior can provide deeper insight into the moral dynamics of faith.

### 2.1 Objective

The main objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior, and to explore the mediating role of religious values in this relationship among Muslim youth.

### 2.2 Hypotheses

H1: Religiosity, religious values and prosocial behaviour will be significantly correlated.

H2: Religiosity will significantly predict prosocial behaviour.

H3: Religiosity will significantly predict spiritual values.

H4: Religious values will significantly predict prosocial behaviour.

H5: Religious values will mediate the religiosity-prosocial behaviour relationship.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Participants

The study comprised 183 Muslim youth, aged between 22 and 35 years ( $M = 25.11$ ,  $SD = 4.77$ ). Participants were randomly selected from various departments of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India). Out of the total, 94 of them were males. Regarding their educational background, 47.8% were enrolled in undergraduate programs, 42.2% in postgraduate programs, and 10.0% were doctoral candidates.

#### 3.2 Measures

*Religious Commitment Inventory* (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003)

The RCI-10 was used to assess the level of participants' religious commitment. It consists of 10 items, divided into two subscales: Intrapersonal Religious Commitment (6 items) and Interpersonal Religious Commitment (4 items). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (totally true of me), with the higher score representing higher level of religious commitment. The original scale reported a Cronbach's alpha of .93, while the present study obtained a reliability coefficient of .71.

*Scale of Islamic Religiosity Attitude* (SIRA; Marwa, 2010)

The worship subscale of the SIRA was used to measure engagement in Islamic rituals and religious practices. It includes 9 items rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The items assess the frequency of performing religious duties such as salat (prayer), fasting (sawm) during Ramadhan, giving Zakah (charity), and performing pilgrimage (Hajj). The reliability coefficient for this subscale in the current study was .65. The scores from the SIRA and RCI-10 (Intrapersonal Religious Commitment-6 items) were combined to represent overall religiosity, with a combined Cronbach's alpha of .77.

*Spiritual Values Scale – Altruistic Values Subscale* Nazam et al. (2015)

Religious values were assessed using the Altruistic Values subscale of the Spiritual Values Scale (SVS)

developed by Nazam et al. (2015). This subscale comprises 8 items measuring altruistic or religious values such as charity, kindness, modesty, truthfulness, reliance on God, repentance, unity, and love. Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The original scale reported a Cronbach's alpha of .92, while the present study found an internal consistency of .65 for this subscale.

*Adults' Prosocialness Scale* (Capara et al., 2005)

This 16-item self-report scale was used to measure prosocial behavior in adults. It assesses tendencies related to sharing, helping, caring, and empathy toward others. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never/almost never true) to 5 (almost always true). Total scores range from 16 to 80, with higher scores indicating greater prosocial behavior. The reliability coefficient for the current sample was .78.

#### 3.3 Procedure

Participants were approached individually and in small groups. They were informed about the nature and purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. After obtaining informed consent, participants completed the questionnaires in a quiet setting under the researcher's supervision. Upon completion, participants were thanked for their time and cooperation.

#### 3.4 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 and PROCESS Macro (Version 3.4; Hayes, 2018). Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were conducted to examine relationships among variables. Mediation analysis was performed to identify the underlying mechanism through which religiosity influences prosocial tendencies.

### 4 Results

#### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

As presented in Table 1, religiosity (intrapersonal religious commitment) was positively and significantly associated with religious values ( $r = .195$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and prosocial behavior ( $r = .165$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Additionally, religious values were positively correlated with proso-

cial behavior ( $r = .183, p < .05$ ). In contrast, interpersonal religious commitment did not show significant associations with either religious values ( $r = .083, p > .05$ ) or prosocial behavior ( $r = .004, p > .05$ ).

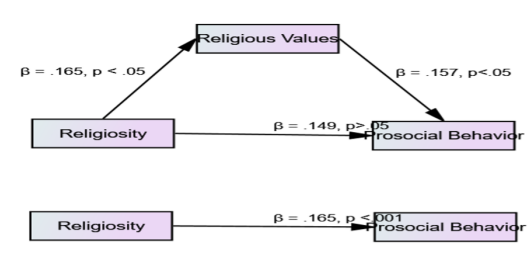
**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations of Study Variables (N=183)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Inter RC	12.383	2.435	–		
2. Intra RC/Rel	56.94	6.530	.567**	–	
3. Rel V	34.159	2.807	.083	.195**	–
4. PB	63.060	7.203	.004	.165*	.183*

\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; Inter RC= Interpersonal Religious Commitment; Intra RC/ Rel=Intrapersonal Religious Commitment/ Religiosity; Rel V= Religious Values; PB= Pro-social Behavior

## 4.2 Mediation Analysis

A simple mediation model was tested using Hayes (2013) PROCESS Model 4, with intrapersonal religious commitment as the independent variable, prosocial behavior as the dependent variable, and religious values as the mediator. As evident from Fig. 1, Religiosity (intrapersonal religious commitment) significantly predicted prosocial behavior (H2:  $B = .183, \beta = .165, SE = .081, p < .001$ ). Religiosity significantly predicted religious values (H3:  $B = .084, \beta = .165, SE = .031, p < .05$ ). Religious values significantly predicted prosocial behavior (H4:  $B = .402, \beta = .157, SE = .190, p < .05$ ). After controlling for the mediator, religiosity was no longer a significant predictor of prosocial behavior, indicating full mediation.



**Figure 1.** The mediating effect of religious values on the relationship between religiosity-prosocial behaviour

**Table 2.** Total, direct, and indirect effect of religiosity on prosocial behaviour

Types of effect	Effect size	Standard Error	t	p	95% CI (LLCI;ULCI)
Total Effect	.183	.081	2.258	.025	.023;.342
Direct Effect	.149	.082	1.822	.070	-.012;.310
Indirect Effect	.031	.021	2.115	.036	.001;.077

The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval

method (Hayes, 2013) confirms that the indirect effect is significant, as the 95% CI does not include zero. The effect size ( $EI = .031, SE = .021, 95\% CI [.001; .077]$ ) of the mediation was small but statistically significant.

## 5 Discussion

The study examined the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior, focusing on the mediating role of Islamic religious values. Results indicate that intrapersonal religious commitment / religiosity, reflecting the depth of individual faith and devotion was positively associated with both religious values and prosocial behavior. Thus, the hypothesis H1 was supported. Furthermore, intrapersonal religiosity significantly predicted religious values, suggesting that individuals with stronger faith are more likely to internalize Islamic values. Religious values, in turn, significantly predicted prosocial behavior, indicating that those who strongly endorse these values are more likely to engage in helping behaviors. These findings are align with previous research suggesting that religious involvement fosters moral emotions, empathy, and social responsibility (Saroglou, 2011; Johnson et al., 2016).

Mediation analysis showed that religiosity influences prosocial behaviour indirectly through religious values. This finding supports the notion that religious commitment alone does not directly lead to prosocial action; rather, internalized religious values serve as the psychological mechanism translating faith into action. All the proposed hypotheses (H2 to H5) were supported and confirming the significant complete mediating effect of religious values on religiosity-prosocial behaviour relationship.

These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that internalized religious beliefs and values guide socially constructive behaviors (Einolf, 2011). Within Islam, adherence to religious principles, rituals, and ethical guidelines fosters prosocial behaviours such as charity, kindness, and altruism. Youths with strong religiosity, internalize these values and are more likely to engage in voluntary acts that benefit others, reflecting both social responsibility and spiritual devotion.

## 6 Conclusion

In sum, religiosity particularly the intrapersonal religious commitment predicts prosocial behavior among Muslim youth, and Islamic religious values com-

pletely mediate this relationship, highlighting their crucial role in translating religious commitment into helping behavior. Islam, by promoting moral and ethical values such as charity, compassion, and selflessness, encourages believers to engage in prosocial acts. Through these behaviors, Muslim youth fulfill societal responsibilities, alleviate the suffering of others, and strengthen their connection with Allah. Parents and elders play a pivotal role in nurturing these values by modeling religious practices and emphasizing adherence to true Islamic teachings.

## 7 Limitations and Suggestions

The present study has some limitations needed to be addressed in future studies. Self-report measures were used to collect data carrying a possibility of subject bias. Priming/qualitative studies could provide deeper understanding of the constructs. Despite using the single cohort group, cross sectional studies would provide better understanding of age specific helping behaviour. Study was confined to Muslim population. Future surveys could include participants from other religions like, Hinduism, Christianity, etc. Despite these limitations, the study provides clear evidence of the mediating role of religious values in promoting prosocial behavior among Muslim youth, reinforcing the importance of moral and spiritual education within faith-based contexts.

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