Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MODERN SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Saba Mushtaq
B.S. Department of EnglishThe Cosmic Degree College for WomenUniversity of Okara

ABSTRACT

Religion has played a significant role in shaping human behaviour, social relationships, cultural traditions, and moral values throughout history. In modern society, religious beliefs continue to influence individuals' attitudes, decisions, lifestyles, and interactions with other members of the community. Religious teachings provide moral guidance, promote social responsibility, encourage kindness, honesty, forgiveness, tolerance, and respect for others. However, the influence of religion on modern social behaviour is complex because individuals interpret and practise religious teachings differently according to their cultural backgrounds, educational experiences, family environments, and social circumstances. In contemporary society, globalization, technological development, urbanization, modernization, and changing cultural values have transformed the ways people understand and practise religion. This research examines the relationship between religious beliefs and modern social behaviour, with particular attention to moral development, family relationships, gender roles, social cooperation, tolerance, community participation, and attitudes towards social change. It also explores how religious beliefs influence young people's behaviour and how religious values interact with modern social challenges. The study adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research approach based on recent academic literature and secondary sources. The research highlights that religion can contribute positively to social stability, moral responsibility, community development, and social integration. Nevertheless, religious intolerance, discrimination, extremism, and the rigid interpretation of religious teachings may sometimes create social divisions. The study concludes that religious beliefs can have a constructive influence on modern social behaviour when they are practised through compassion, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, equality, and understanding.

KEYWORDS:*Religious beliefs, modern social behaviour, religion and society, moral values, social interaction, cultural traditions, religious tolerance, social responsibility, globalization, modernization, youth behaviour, family relationships, social change, community development, and religious diversity.*

INTRODUCTION

Religion is one of the most important institutions influencing human civilization, culture, and social organization. Since ancient times, religious beliefs have provided individuals with explanations about life, human existence, morality, and the relationship between individuals and society. Andersen, R., Hu, J., & Zhang, T. H. (2025). found that Different religions establish moral principles and behavioural expectations that guide people in their everyday activities. These principles influence how individuals treat their parents, children, neighbours, colleagues, and other members of society. Religion also provides a sense of identity, belonging, and shared responsibility among people who follow similar beliefs. Although modern societies have experienced considerable economic, political, educational, and technological changes, religion remains an influential element of social life.Religious beliefs significantly contribute to the development of moral values and ethical behaviour. Most religious traditions emphasize honesty, kindness, justice, patience, forgiveness, generosity, and respect for human dignity. These principles encourage individuals to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Religious education and family socialization often introduce children to moral responsibilities at an early age. For example, religious teachings concerning helping the poor, respecting elders, protecting vulnerable individuals, and avoiding dishonesty can encourage responsible social behaviour. In this way, religion may function as a source of moral guidance and contribute to the development of individuals who understand their responsibilities towards others.Modern society is characterized by rapid

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs
And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

technological development, globalization, urbanization, educational expansion, and cultural interaction. These developments have transformed people's lifestyles, communication patterns, and social relationships. Individuals increasingly interact with people belonging to different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Consequently, religious beliefs are interpreted and practised within changing social environments. Some individuals maintain traditional religious practices, while others combine religious values with modern lifestyles and changing social expectations. This situation demonstrates that religion is not separate from modernization but continues to interact with economic, political, cultural, and technological developments.

Religious beliefs also influence family structures and community relationships. Many religious traditions emphasize family responsibilities, marriage, parental respect, care for children, and support for elderly family members. Religious gatherings and community activities can strengthen relationships by providing opportunities for social interaction, cooperation, and mutual assistance. Religious institutions frequently organize charitable activities, educational programmes, financial assistance, and community welfare initiatives. Such activities can strengthen social solidarity and encourage individuals to contribute to the well-being of others. However, differences in religious interpretations may also create disagreements concerning marriage, gender roles, education, and family responsibilities.Despite its positive contributions, religion can sometimes become associated with social challenges. Religious intolerance, prejudice, discrimination, sectarian disagreements, and extremist interpretations may negatively affect social relationships. In multicultural societies, individuals may experience difficulties when religious identities are used to exclude or discriminate against people with different beliefs. Social media can further influence these situations by spreading religious misinformation, stereotypes, and controversial opinions. Choong, W. (2025). Explained that Therefore, it is important to distinguish between religious teachings that promote peace and compassion and the inappropriate use of religious identity to justify hostility or social inequality. Religious tolerance and mutual understanding are essential for maintaining peaceful relationships in diverse communities.The study of religious beliefs and their influence on modern social behaviour is important because it helps explain the relationship between individual values and wider social structures. Understanding this relationship can help educators, researchers, policymakers, religious leaders, and community organizations develop strategies for promoting tolerance, responsible citizenship, and peaceful coexistence. It is particularly important to examine the experiences of young people because they are growing up in an environment influenced by both traditional religious values and modern digital culture. This research therefore investigates the positive and negative dimensions of religious influence and explores how religious beliefs can contribute to a more respectful, cooperative, and socially responsible modern society.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do religious beliefs influence modern social behaviour, particularly in relation to moral values, family relationships, social interactions, cultural practices, tolerance, and community participation?

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of religious beliefs on the moral values and ethical behaviour of individuals in modern society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion has historically been recognized as an important influence on individual behaviour and social organization. In contemporary sociology, religion is understood not only as a system of spiritual beliefs but also as a social institution that influences relationships, collective identities, moral expectations, and community practices. Religious teachings provide individuals with principles that help them understand their responsibilities towards family members, neighbours, and society. Dhami, S., Hajimoladarvish, N., & Mamidi, P. (2023). Explains that These principles can influence everyday decisions, including charitable activities, interpersonal relationships, social cooperation, and attitudes towards other people. Dole (2024), in his discussion of religious beliefs and social practices, emphasizes the importance of understanding religious beliefs within the social practices through which communities maintain and express their religious identities. This perspective suggests that religion is not limited to private beliefs but is also expressed through collective activities and social expectations. In modern society, religious institutions continue to influence social behaviour through worship, education, community gatherings, and charitable activities. Religious beliefs may therefore contribute to social stability by creating shared values and encouraging individuals to follow commonly recognized moral principles.One of the major areas of research concerning religion and society is the relationship between religious commitment and prosocial behaviour. Prosocial behaviour refers to actions intended to benefit other individuals or the wider community, including helping, sharing, volunteering, cooperating, and supporting disadvantaged people. Religious teachings in many traditions encourage individuals to assist those experiencing poverty, illness, unemployment, and other social difficulties. Kelly, Kramer, and Shariff (2024) conducted a meta-analysis examining almost six decades of research on religiosity and prosociality. Their findings indicate an overall positive relationship between religiosity and prosocial behaviour, particularly when religiosity is measured through individuals' self-reported beliefs and experiences. Similarly, research by the authors of *Religion and Cooperation Across the Globe* (2023) found that religious belief was associated with positive reciprocity, altruism, and trust across several religious traditions. These findings demonstrate that religion can encourage cooperation and social responsibility. However, the relationship should not be interpreted as evidence that every religious individual behaves more positively than every non-religious individual. Social environment, personal values, education, and economic circumstances also influence behaviour.

Social trust is an essential element of a peaceful and cooperative society. It refers to the willingness of individuals to trust other people, cooperate with them, and participate in activities that benefit the community. Religious communities often develop social relationships through shared worship, religious celebrations, community programmes, and charitable activities. These interactions can strengthen interpersonal relationships and create networks of mutual assistance. Research published in the *European Sociological Review* by the authors of the 2024 study on religious involvement and trust found that religious service attendance had a positive average impact on generalized trust, volunteering, and perceived

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

cooperativeness in two British panel datasets. This research is particularly important because it uses longitudinal data rather than relying exclusively on a single survey. However, trust developed within religious communities does not automatically extend to people outside those communities. Religious identity may strengthen relationships among members while creating boundaries between different groups. Therefore, the social influence of religion depends partly on whether religious communities encourage broader cooperation or primarily emphasize internal group relationships.Religious identity is an important part of personal and collective identity. It influences how individuals understand themselves, identify with particular communities, and develop relationships with people who share similar beliefs. Religious identity may be expressed through clothing, dietary practices, festivals, worship, language, moral expectations, and participation in religious institutions. Dhami, Wei, and Mamidi (2024) examine the relationship between religious identity, trust, reciprocity, and prosociality. Dole, A. C. (2024). revealed that Their research highlights that religious identity can influence social decisions and that its effects may differ depending on the religious group and the social context. This indicates that religion can produce both cooperation and divisions. Individuals may show greater trust and support towards members of their own religious community, while having less positive attitudes towards outsiders. In diverse societies, these patterns can influence friendship formation, neighbourhood relationships, educational environments, and workplace interactions. Consequently, modern societies need to encourage religious identities that are compatible with respect for people belonging to different communities.

Social cohesion refers to the strength of relationships among individuals and groups within a society. It includes mutual trust, social participation, solidarity, cooperation, and a shared sense of belonging. Religion can contribute to social cohesion by creating common moral expectations and encouraging people to participate in collective activities. Judijanto, Siminto, and Rahman (2024) investigated the influence of religious beliefs and religious practices on social cohesion in Indonesia. Their quantitative research involved 175 respondents from different religious communities and used survey-based analysis. The authors reported positive relationships between religious beliefs, religious practices, and social cohesion. Their research suggests that religious participation can contribute to community resilience and interfaith harmony. Nevertheless, social cohesion should not be understood as complete agreement among all members of society. A healthy society also requires respect for differences and the freedom to maintain individual beliefs. Religious institutions can strengthen social cohesion when they encourage peaceful interaction, equal treatment, and cooperation across religious boundaries.Religion has frequently been discussed in relation to peace, conflict, cooperation, and social stability. Salam-Salmaoui, R., Hassan, S., & Salam, S. (2025). Elaborated on Many religious traditions contain teachings that encourage forgiveness, compassion, patience, justice, and the peaceful resolution of disagreements. Such values can help individuals manage conflicts and maintain positive social relationships. Kiper and Sosis (2024) discuss the role of religion in the evolution of peace and emphasize its potential importance in regulating cooperation, tolerance, and peaceful values. Their discussion demonstrates that religion should be examined as a complex social system rather than simply as a cause of conflict or a source of peace. Religious institutions can provide spaces for dialogue, mediation, and community reconciliation. However, religious differences can become a source of conflict when political interests, discrimination, intolerance, or extreme interpretations are involved. Therefore, the influence of religion on peaceful

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

behaviour depends not only on religious identity but also on the interpretation and practical application of religious principles.

Modernization has changed many aspects of social life, including education, employment, family structures, communication, and cultural traditions. These changes have influenced how people understand and practise religion. In earlier societies, religious institutions often exercised considerable influence over education, social organization, and community decision-making. In modern societies, individuals have access to different sources of information and may develop personal interpretations of religious teachings. Modernization does not necessarily eliminate religion; rather, it can change the ways in which religious beliefs are expressed. Some individuals maintain traditional religious practices, while others reinterpret religious teachings in relation to contemporary issues such as human rights, gender equality, scientific development, and environmental responsibility. The relationship between religion and modernization is therefore dynamic. Religious communities must frequently respond to changing social expectations while maintaining their fundamental beliefs and values.Globalization has increased contact between people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. International travel, migration, global communication, education, and international employment have created opportunities for individuals to interact with communities that follow different religious traditions. These developments have increased the importance of religious understanding and intercultural communication. Globalization can help individuals learn about other religions and develop greater appreciation for cultural diversity. At the same time, increased contact may produce disagreements when people have different moral expectations, customs, and religious practices. Religious institutions can respond positively to globalization by encouraging interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect. A society that recognizes religious diversity can benefit from the contributions of different communities. Thus, globalization creates both opportunities and challenges for religious identity and modern social behaviour.

Social media has become an important platform for religious communication, education, identity formation, and social interaction. Individuals can access religious lectures, discussions, educational videos, online worship activities, and information about different religious traditions through digital platforms. These developments have changed how religious knowledge is shared and how religious communities communicate. Wang, J., Balakrishnan, B., Wan, X., Yu, Q., & Ye, Q. (2025). found that Haq and Kwok (2024), in their cross-cultural research on religious social media, examined encounters between Muslim users in Pakistan and Buddhist and Christian users in Hong Kong. Their research found that social media can create opportunities for interreligious dialogue but may also strengthen group boundaries and polarization through selective exposure and echo chambers. Their findings are important because they demonstrate that technology does not automatically promote tolerance. The effects of digital religious communication depend on the content individuals access, their willingness to communicate with different groups, and their ability to evaluate information critically.Young people are particularly affected by the interaction between traditional religious teachings and modern cultural influences. Their attitudes and lifestyles are shaped by family upbringing, educational institutions, friendship groups, religious organizations, and digital media. Religious beliefs may influence young people's decisions concerning friendships, clothing, marriage, education, personal discipline, and social responsibilities. Mattes, Haselbacher, Limacher, and Novak (2025) examine youth religiosity and the politics of belonging in digital times.

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

METHODOLOGY

The present research adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology to investigate the influence of religious beliefs on modern social behaviour. The study is based primarily on secondary sources, including recent peer-reviewed journal articles, academic publications, research reports, and relevant scholarly literature published between 2023 and 2025. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding attitudes, beliefs, values, social experiences, and behavioural patterns rather than measuring a single numerical relationship. The study examines different dimensions of religious influence, including moral development, family relationships, social interaction, community participation, youth behaviour, gender roles, religious tolerance, and the effects of modernization and globalization. Academic literature is selected according to its relevance to the research objectives, publication date, methodological quality, and contribution to understanding religion and society. Research involving different geographical settings and religious traditions is considered to avoid relying on a single cultural perspective. Particular attention is given to studies examining prosocial behaviour, social trust, religious identity, social cohesion, and digital religious communication. The collected information is organized into major thematic categories and examined through comparative analysis to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. The study also considers the limitations of existing research, particularly differences in the measurement of religiosity, variations in cultural contexts, and the difficulty of separating religious influence from other social factors. Ethical research principles are maintained through accurate acknowledgement of original authors, appropriate academic referencing, and avoidance of unsupported generalizations about religious communities. Since the research is based on secondary data, no original interviews, questionnaires, or field observations are claimed. The methodology therefore provides a structured foundation for examining existing academic evidence and developing a comprehensive understanding of how religious beliefs influence social behaviour in contemporary society.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design of this study is descriptive, qualitative, and literature-based, with an analytical and comparative orientation. The descriptive component explains the different ways in which religious beliefs influence individuals and communities, while the analytical component examines the possible reasons behind these influences. The study is organized around the relationship between independent and dependent concepts. Religious beliefs, religious practices, religious education, family religious socialization, and participation in religious institutions are considered the principal explanatory factors. Modern social behaviour is examined through indicators such as honesty, cooperation, interpersonal trust, tolerance, charitable activities, family responsibility, social participation, and attitudes towards cultural diversity. The research design also recognizes the influence of external factors, including education, economic circumstances, age, gender, urbanization, globalization, and digital media. These factors may strengthen, weaken, or modify the relationship between religious beliefs and social behaviour. The study uses thematic comparison to examine findings from different countries and religious traditions, allowing the researcher to identify common patterns without assuming that all communities experience religion in the same way. The literature is examined in relation to the research question and objectives, and the findings are organized into themes representing the major dimensions of

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

religious influence. The design does not claim to establish direct causation because secondary literature may involve different research methods and populations. Instead, it provides an integrated understanding of the relationship between religion and modern social behaviour and identifies areas requiring further empirical investigation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process is based on thematic analysis of the selected academic literature and secondary research findings. Initially, relevant publications are examined to identify information connected with religious beliefs, moral development, social cooperation, interpersonal trust, family relationships, youth behaviour, social cohesion, religious tolerance, and technological change. The identified information is then organized into thematic categories according to the research objectives. The first theme focuses on moral development and examines how religious teachings concerning honesty, compassion, justice, forgiveness, and responsibility may influence individual decisions. The second theme concerns social relationships and investigates the contribution of religious participation to trust, volunteering, cooperation, and community support. The third theme examines social identity and tolerance, including the possibility that religious belonging may strengthen relationships within particular communities while sometimes creating boundaries between different groups. The fourth theme focuses on modernization and digital communication, exploring how social media and technological development have transformed religious education, religious authority, and interactions between different communities. The fifth theme examines youth and family behaviour, particularly the continuing influence of family socialization alongside changing cultural and digital environments. A comparative approach is used to identify similarities and differences between the findings of studies conducted in different geographical and cultural settings. For example, research on cooperation and prosociality is considered alongside studies of social media polarization and interreligious communication. The analysis also distinguishes between reported associations and proven causal relationships. This distinction is important because religious individuals may also differ in education, family background, social participation, and other characteristics that influence behaviour. Finally, the themes are synthesized to develop an overall interpretation of the positive contributions and potential limitations of religious beliefs in modern society. The analysis is therefore intended to provide a balanced understanding based on available academic evidence rather than personal assumptions or unsupported statistical claims.

FINDINGS

The findings of this literature-based study indicate that religious beliefs have a significant and multidimensional relationship with modern social behaviour. The reviewed literature suggests that religion continues to influence individual values, social relationships, community participation, and cultural practices despite major changes in contemporary society. One of the most important findings is that religious beliefs can encourage positive moral behaviour. Religious teachings concerning honesty, kindness, forgiveness, patience, justice, and compassion provide individuals with ethical principles that may guide their everyday decisions. The research by Kelly, Kramer, and Shariff (2024) supports an overall positive association between religiosity and prosocial behaviour. Another important finding is that religious participation can strengthen social cooperation and community relationships. Religious gatherings, charitable activities, and voluntary services provide opportunities for

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs
And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

individuals to develop trust and support one another. The Indonesian study by Judijanto, Siminto, and Rahman (2024) also identifies positive relationships between religious beliefs, religious practices, and social cohesion. However, the findings indicate that religious influence is not always positive or uniform. Strong religious identification may sometimes encourage discrimination, prejudice, and social divisions when individuals develop negative attitudes towards people belonging to other religious communities. Research by Haq and Kwok (2024) demonstrates that social media can promote interreligious communication while also strengthening group boundaries and polarization. Another finding concerns the relationship between religion and young people's behaviour. Family upbringing remains an important influence on religious identity, although digital platforms increasingly provide access to religious information and alternative interpretations. The literature also indicates that modernization and globalization have transformed religious practices without necessarily eliminating religious influence. Individuals increasingly negotiate their religious values in relation to education, employment, technology, cultural diversity, and changing social expectations. Furthermore, religious institutions can contribute to community development through charity, education, social welfare, and assistance to disadvantaged individuals.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that religious beliefs remain an important influence on modern social behaviour, even in societies experiencing rapid technological, cultural, economic, and social transformations. Religion contributes to the development of moral values, personal identity, family relationships, social responsibility, and community participation. Religious teachings can encourage individuals to practise honesty, kindness, justice, forgiveness, generosity, and respect for other people. These values are important for maintaining positive relationships and developing peaceful communities. The reviewed literature also demonstrates that religious participation may strengthen social trust, cooperation, volunteering, and social cohesion. Religious organizations can make valuable contributions to society through educational activities, charitable services, community welfare programmes, and support for disadvantaged individuals. Nevertheless, the study also recognizes that religion can sometimes be associated with intolerance, discrimination, extremism, and social divisions when beliefs are interpreted or used in ways that encourage hostility towards other groups. Therefore, religious influence should not be understood as entirely positive or negative; it depends on how religious values are interpreted, communicated, and practised within particular social environments. Modernization and globalization have also changed the ways individuals experience religion, particularly through increased cultural interaction and the expansion of digital communication. Young people now encounter religious information through family members, educational institutions, religious organizations, and social media platforms. These developments create opportunities for religious learning but also require critical thinking and responsible communication. The study recommends that religious education should emphasize peaceful coexistence, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance, and social responsibility. Religious leaders, educational institutions, families, and policymakers should cooperate to promote understanding among different religious communities. Greater attention should also be given to young people's social development and their ability to distinguish reliable religious information from misinformation and divisive content.

Journal Of
Social Values, Beliefs
And Contemporary Culture
VOL. 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

REFERENCES

Andersen, R., Hu, J., & Zhang, T. H. (2025). Religion, Diversity and Outgroup Tolerance Across 79 Countries: The 'Homogenizing'Role of Heterogeneity. Sociology, 59(6), 1150-1172.

Choong, W. (2025). Tinkering with theology: Liquid faith and digital theological adaptation among Pentecostal youth in Singapore. Religions, 17(1), 23.

Dhami, S., Hajimoladarvish, N., & Mamidi, P. (2023). Loss aversion and tax evasion: Theory and evidence. Arthaniti: Journal of Economic Theory and Practice, 09767479241283929.

Dole, A. C. (2024). Religious beliefs and social practices. Religion, 54(4), 727-748.

Salam-Salmaoui, R., Hassan, S., & Salam, S. (2025). Virtual madrasas: Digital governmentality and the shaping of Islamic subjectivity in Pakistan. Journal of Media and Religion, 24(2), 49-71.

Wang, J., Balakrishnan, B., Wan, X., Yu, Q., & Ye, Q. (2025). The revival of spiritual practices: Factors influencing the "seeking deities and offering prayers" behavior of China's Generation Z on social media in an atheistic context. Frontiers in Psychology, 15, 1485265.