



Eğitimin Amerikan Müslümanlarının Dindarlığına Etkisi

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ÖZET

Eğitim ve din kurumları, sosyal yaşamın iki temel ögesidir. Eğitim bugüne değin yaşamın çeşitli yönleri bakımından çalışılmış ve bireylerin davranışları, bakış açıları ve tercihleri üzerinde, yine bireylerin sosyoekonomik statüleri, evlilikleri, doğurganlıkları ve sağlıklarında meydana gelen değişimlere bağlı olarak eğitimin büyük bir etkisi olduğu ortaya koyulmuştur. Eğitim gibi, din de bireylerin tutumları, bakış açıları ve tercihleri üzerinde önemli bir belirleyici olarak kabul edilmektedir. Eğitim ve din arasındaki ilişkinin niteliğini açıklamak için, sosyolojinin kurucuları, Marx, Weber, Mill ve Durkheim gibi sosyal bilimciler, eğitim seviyesinin yükselmesinin dindarlıktaki düşüş ile ilişkisinin olduğunu savunmuşlardır. Onlar ülkelerin ekonomik olarak geliştiği ve eğitim seviyelerinin yükseldiği zaman dine duyulan ihtiyacın azalacağını öngörmüşlerdir. Bu öngörünün gerçekleşip gerçekleşmeyeceği hakkındaki tartışma halen devam etmekte olup, sosyal bilimciler arasında dinin geleceği konusunda bir fikir birliği mevcut değildir. PEW Amerikan Müslüman Anketi 2008'den elde edilen verileri kullanarak, bu çalışma, eğitim seviyesinin Amerikan Müslümanlarının dindarlığı üzerindeki etkisini inceleyerek mevcut tartışmaya katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ampirik bulgularımız, eğitimin bazı dini ölçekler üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olmasına rağmen, bunun tüm dini değişkenler için geçerli olmadığını göstermektedir.

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The Effect of Education on American Muslims' Religiosity

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ABSTRACT

Education and religion are two fundamental institutions for social life. Education has been studied for various aspects of life and found that it has a vast impact on several mechanisms of individuals life in terms of their behaviors, perspectives, and preferences related to the changes on their socioeconomic status, marriage, fertility and health. Like education, religion has also considered as a significant determinant on individuals' attitudes, perspectives, and preferences. In order to explain the nature of the relationship between education and religion, social scientists including the fathers of sociology, Marx, Weber, Mill, and Durkheim have often argued the high level of education is more likely related to decline in religiosity. They predict that when countries develop economically and the levels of education rise, the need for religion will diminish. The debate about the prediction still going on and there is no consensus among social scientists about the future of religion. Using data from PEW American Muslim Survey 2008, this study aims to contribute to the existing discussion by studying the effect of schooling years on American Muslims religiosity. Our empirical findings suggest while education has negative effects on some religious measures; this is not valid for all religious variables.

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Keywords:

Education, American Muslims, Religiosity

Introduction

This paper examines the relationship between the level of education and Muslim religiosity in the U.S by using PEW Muslim Survey 2007. Based on well-known secularization theory and existing data indications, most studies suggest that there is a negative relationship between educational attainment and religiosity and the most educated are the least religious (see, for example, (Greeley, 1973; Hastings & Hoge, 1976, 1981; Hoge, 1974; Moberg & McEnery, 1976; Stark, 1963; Thalheimer, 1973; Zelan, 1968). However, limited number of studies have found the reverse relationship that within denominations, there is a positive association between education and church attendance (Schwadel, 2011). For Mormons, this nature of the relationship is turned to be positive for other measures of

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religiosity suggesting higher education does not have a secularizing influence on Mormons (Albrecht & Heaton, 1998).

For this study, American Muslims are the study of analysis. To investigate Muslims in America has several advantages over to study the effect of education on Muslim religiosity since in other Muslim populated countries individuals have been facing other social problems such as violence, dictatorships, poverty which are the reasons for lack of educational opportunities for most of the individuals. Also, tradition and religion are intertwined in the Muslim populated countries which makes complex to analyze the influence of education over religiosity without the effect of tradition.

Theoretical and Empirical Background

After the arising of modernism, popular acceptance has been taken place that religion has been eroding by the impact of Education and modernity (Casanova, 1994). As founders of sociology, Comte, Weber, and Durkheim, in general, suggested that education will eventually diminish religion because of the secularization process (Schwadel, 2011). From a contemporary sociological perspective, Wilson (1982) elaborates the secularization thesis as a system that is against the notion of “ultimate salvation”. The possible reasons behind this conclusion can be explained by the functions of education over society. Education in the formal institutions primarily imparts knowledge scientifically (Evans, 2011), provides credentials that are significant for determinations of location in the stratification system (Collins, 1979), relates with supporting diverse opinions and environments (Balswick, Ward, & Carlson, 1975; Moiseyenko, 2005), encourages the self-control in social life instead of external control mechanisms (Fox, Payne, Priest, & Philliber, 1977; Meier, 1982). These functions are usually presented as negative factors for religious outcomes.

In terms of identifying the relationship between education and religion from the negative perspective, previous studies have displayed “the image of erosion”, and indicated that education erodes religious beliefs and attitudes in two ways; 1) Through familiarity with science and other cultures, 2) With being exposed to secular viewpoints (Johnson, 1997; Sherkat, 1998). Educational attainment usually is the main determinant for social mobility that changes individuals’ income and employment status, scientific viewpoints, and familiarity with other cultures (Hungerman, 2014). From the standpoint of explaining the association between education and religion, educational attainment also changes religious behaviors because of being exposed to secular viewpoints that usually accept traditional religious teachings as myths. Therefore, schooling becomes a generic explanation for the erosion of religions that social and psychological fundamentals of religious belief and religious practices have been lessened gradually. More specifically, longer engagement with educational institutions leads individuals to contact with different ideas, people and cultures that make individuals disengaged from their faith (Johnson, 1997). Glock and Stark argue this situation based on the view “the determinable prediction that men will tend to be either scientific or religious, and not both” (Glock & Stark, 1965). Thus, more educated people are less likely to believe in spirituals, miracles, heaven, devil, and the literal truth of the Bible (Glaeser & Sacerdote, 2001).

Furthermore, schooling years have a negative impact on religiosity and an additional year of schooling causes individuals to be non-affiliated. This is considered as a lifelong effect of secularization which education fades individuals' religious commitment (Hungerman, 2014; Petersen, 1994), belief in God (Johnson, 1997), belief in the Bible (Sherkat, 1998), belief in divine involvement and control (Schieman, 2010), and the frequency of prayer (Baker, 2008). Regarding some religious traditions, existing research examining religious groups and their educational attainment have reported for all religious traditions low educated people are more likely have a higher frequency of prayer and read religious texts except for Evangelical Protestants who have a high level of prayer with the highest levels of education (Chatters, Taylor & Lincoln, 1999; Petersen, 1994).

On the other hand, recent studies have also found a positive association between religious attendance and education by suggesting education has a positive effect on any form of social group membership (Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Particularly, it is reported that the main determinant of the direction of the relationship is moderated by religious tradition (McFarland, Wright, & Weakliem, 2011). Recent papers explain the positive link as theoretically usual since attending to religious organizations is a basic form of social interaction. Educational attainment builds social skills and promotes individuals to be involved in social groups and activities such as church attendance. Also, while religious attendance rises across individuals in the U.S, it declines across denominations (Glaeser & Sacerdote, 2001).

The existing discussion on the impact of education on religion presents a variety of explanations to reveal the bidirectional link. The most common of these concepts is network closure that individuals holding high network closure have better communication and social interaction skills that improve trust between group members (Blanchard, 2007; Coleman, 1988). Religious groups that have more intense network interactions provide surroundings that protect the members from being exposed to the other worldviews, the erosion of belief. These types of religious groups also mostly managed by highly educated people to deliver the messages of the God in a comprehensive way to the members and answer the challenging questions that need sophisticated answers that may come from the other worldviews (Wuthnow, 1994). Since religion can provide moral orders, self-discipline, coping strategies, social and organizational ties out of family which are the sources of pro-social and positive attitudes and behaviors, the high network closure surroundings could facilitate improved outcomes for the members (Smith, 2003).

Considering religious traditions and education level, prior studies have stated education is associated with higher prayer frequency for Evangelical and Black Protestants, but less frequent prayer with the nonaffiliated religious groups. While education also promotes the belief that the Bible is a book of fables for mainline Protestants and the nonaffiliated groups, it increases the level of accepting the Bible as inspired by God for Evangelicals and Black Protestants, Mormons, and Catholics (Albrecht & Heaton, 1998; McFarland et al., 2011).

Although numerous studies have analyzed the effect of education on religion, most of them have been conducted in Judeo-Christian societies in the West. Obviously, religion and education have interrelated social institutions, so religion also can have impacts on education too. Thus, because the tenets of any religion about education and science can be imparted from each other, the examination of the impact of education on Islam can be different than other religious traditions too. Al-Attas (1997) defines education as “something progressively instilled into man”. Both the verses of Quran and the Hadiths of Prophet Mohammad indicate the importance of education. The quotation from Al-Attas in the first world conference on Muslim education will be useful to understand the concept of education in Islam: “*Education should ... cater for the growth of ‘man’ in all its aspects: Spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, Physical, scientific, linguistic, both Individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection*” (Haw, 1998).

Considering the given bidirectional theoretical background, to explore the effect of education on Muslim religiosity this study presents a significant input to the existing literature. The following statements can be hypothesized based on the secularization theory in order to test the validity of the new challenging findings.

Hypothesis 1 Education has negative association with belief.

Hypothesis 2 Education reduces the religious practices.

Hypothesis 3 Education has negative relationship with the religious attendance.

Method

Data

This paper investigates the influences of education on American Muslims' religious beliefs, activities, attendance using data from Muslim Americans survey conducted in 2007 the Pew Research Center. The Pew Muslim American Study is administered by telephone at a national level. It has sufficient variables to measure religion from different perspectives in addition to various measures of personal values and demographic characteristics.

Dependent Variables.

The dependent variables are classified into three groups of religious measures: religious belief, religious behavior, and religious organization. First, we attempt to measure orthodoxy belief of Muslim respondents. Because the level of beliefs of Muslims is extremely high (more than 90% for each question), we create an index variable using four different belief questions that measure people's belief, believe in God, believe in the prophet, believe in hereafter and believe in angels (yes-no answers). For the faith of religious intensity, participants who answered “no” to at least one of each item were accepted as a “skeptical” group; whereas participants answering “yes” to all items were accepted as a “perfect believer” group expressed with “skeptical” (0) and “perfect believer” (1) (Cronbach's alpha=.70). This categorization can be accepted theoretically valid because to be a Muslim, people have to believe all these items at the same time. Second, this study utilizes two types of religious

behavior components as dependent variables. The first one is devotional activities that are necessary for being an ideal Muslim. The data has three items that respondents asked “Here are a few religious activities...for each one, please tell me if it is important to you or not: Giving charity, or zakat, fasting during Ramadan and Undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca. The answers are ranged from very important to you, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important. We recoded all three items as dummy variable very important vs. less than very important. Then, we follow the same creating an index procedure as we did in "perfect believer" variable in order to get an ideal type of devout Muslim (0 vs1) by gathering these three items together (Cronbach's alpha=.71). the new variable is called "servant" (1). Another religious practice component is the frequency of prayer. Respondents are asked the following questions “Concerning daily salah or prayer, do you, in general, pray all five salah daily, make some of the five salah daily, occasionally make salah, only make Eid Prayers, or do you never pray?” We recoded the categories as 5 times in a day (4), some daily (3), occasionally (2), never (1). The last religious measure is the religious service attendance that determines the mosque attendance of American Muslims. The respondents are questioned “On average, how often do you attend the mosque or Islamic center for salah and Jumah prayer? The answers are classified more than once a week, once a week for Jumah prayer, occasionally and never.

As a result, we have four different dependent variables in this study that the first is to measure belief; the next two are for religious activities, and the last one is for religious service attendance which represents three dimensions of religious belief, behavior, and belonging.

The combination of binary, cumulative and multinomial logistic regression models utilized to analyze the relationship between the dependent and independent variables because some dependent variables are two categorical that is most suitable for binary logistic regression, while some others have more categories which are more convenient for the cumulative and the multinomial level of analyses.

Independent Variables.

The degree level of education is used as the primary independent variable for this study. Education is recoded as a dummy variable into four categories (1=less than high school, 2=some college, 3=college, 4=graduate) based on respondents' educational degrees.

The other covariates are involved in all models to control for relevant correlations between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, a categorical family income variable is contained within the models to monitor for other aspects of social status, such as quality of the educational institution. Age is recoded into four categories. Dummy variables for female respondents and married respondents control for gender and marital status. Race is another categorical variable that has four attributions (white, black, Asian, other) that was created as dummy variable white vs. others. Finally, the variable, converts Muslims are included in the models to control possible differences between convert Muslims or Muslims who raised as Muslim.

Results

Table 1 demonstrates the univariate analyses of the individuals in the survey. The high percentages of belief of respondents can be clearly seen in Table 1. As 82% even after the index procedure. Over half of individuals think all religious practices are very important. The initial frequency tests indicate that the proportions of people who attend mosque or Islamic center are distributed evenly into the categories. Almost a quarter of respondents attend religious service once a week that is the biggest part of the distribution categories for this dependent variable. Remain percentages are more than once a week by 15.9%, once or twice a month by 10.4%, a few times in a year by 19.2%, seldom by 11.6% and never by 17.7%. As another measure of religious practice, 40 percent of people answered that they pray salah five times in a day. Only 12 percent of Muslim respondents never pray salah.

The mean of the primary independent variable, education is 2.45 which are more than some college. Also, the initial frequency test indicates 30 percent of respondents have less than college level of education, 20 percent of them have some college, 27 percent of them have college degree level and 24 percent of them have a graduate level of education. Table 1 exhibits that 53 percent of respondents are male, 67 percent are married and 17 percent of them converted to Islam.

Table 2 predicts the binary logistic regression models for belief and servant index variables. In the first model, the results indicate that education has no effect on people's

Table 1. Univariate Statistics of Individuals in PEW Muslim Study Survey 2007.

	N	Mean	StdDev	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Perfect believer	1050	0.825714	0.379536	0	1
Servant	1050	0.542857	0.498397	0	1
Attend	1044	1.388889	0.956439	0	3
Prayer	1033	2.921588	1.071408	1	4
Independent Variables					
Education	1031	2.458778	1.148236	1	4
Raised-Muslim	1048	0.170802	0.376515	0	1
Male	1050	0.528571	0.499421	0	1
South	1050	0.301905	0.459303	0	1
White	1030	0.334952	0.472203	0	1
Income	868	1.095622	0.782643	0	2
Marital status	1029	0.325559	0.468811	0	1
Age	1050	42.36857	15.85084	18	99

religious belief. Surprisingly, the model illustrates that White and raised-Muslim people more likely are more skeptic than non-Whites and converts by 37% and 34 respectively. Income also is another statistically significant negative predictor for belief. The second model illustrates that education has a negative effect on the sum of religious practices. Each unit increase in education, the odds of being a servant decreases by 14.2%. In this model, the other only significant variable is the race that white is negatively associated with being a servant by 42%.

Table 2. Binary Logistic Regression for Educational Effect on Belief and Pillars of Islam.

	Perfect Believer			Servant		
	b	EXP(B)	B	b	EXP(B)	B
Intercept	3.038		***	1.103		**
Education	-0.0831	0.92	-	-0.153	0.858	*
Raised-Muslim	-0.4609	0.631	*	0.0106	1.011	
Male	-0.2698	0.764	-	-0.1905	0.827	
South	0.174	1.19		0.1801	1.197	
White	-0.4155	0.66	*	-0.537	0.585	**
Income	-0.3725	0.689	**	-0.0518	0.95	
Marital	-0.389	0.678		-0.2418	0.785	
Age	-0.00801	0.992		-0.00486	0.995	
N	860			860		
R²	.05			.04		

*p <.05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

Table 3 shows the cumulative logistic regression for mosque or Islamic center attendance. The model indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and religious attendance. In this model, the effect of being originally Muslim has a great impact on attendance as well as being male. Net of statistics, for respondents who raised as Muslims, the odds of being attender more than once a week is 48% higher than being never attender. In addition, white and age (possible curvilinear model controlled and has not existed, so it did not include in the model) have a negative effect on attendance.

Table 3. Cumulative Logistic Regression for Educational Effect on Attendance

		b	EXP(B)		B
Intercept	3	-1.1163		***	
Intercept	2	0.2716			
Intercept	1	2.4335		***	
Education		-0.0487	0.952		-0.0307
Raised-Muslim		0.3942	1.483	*	0.0851
Male		0.6234	1.865	***	0.1712
South		0.2582	1.295		0.0658
White		-0.7452	0.475	***	-0.1945
Income		-0.1672	0.846		-0.0723
Marital		-0.0496	0.952		-0.0128
Age		-0.0152	0.985	**	-0.1129
N		858			
R²		.10			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; The reference category is 0.

Table 4 exhibits the multinomial logistic regression models for prayer impact on schooling years. Because the score of odds assumptions are violated when cumulative logistic regression is used, the multinomial logistic regression was applied for this model. According to Table 4, education, male, white and marital status variables are significant predictors for at least one of three models. The interpretations suggest that each unit increase in education, the odds of never over 5 times prayer increases by 39% while each unit increase in education, the odds of occasional over 5 times increase by 21%.

Gender race and marital status are the significant covariates in the model suggesting that being male, white and married are favoring to pray less by comparing being female, non-white, and not married respectively. The odds of never prayer over five times daily prayer are

more likely 2.2 times effective for men than women; 4.3 times for whites than non-whites, and 2.7 times for married people than not married people to get more education.

Discussion

As discussed in the beginning of the paper, the previous studies have revealed various findings for the relationship between education and religion (Alam, Amin, & McCormick, 2018). This paper also contributes for this diversity. The belief and attendance variables are not under the effect of educational attainment as secularization theory suggested for Muslim sample in the U.S. While some studies found the positive relationship between religious service attendances in Christianity (McFarland et al., 2011), in this study we find no relationship between them. It is clear we have to consider the reality that the American Muslims are living in a Christian majority country which can makes some disadvantages to attend religious service especially after 9/11. Also, because in Islam women are not obligated to go mosque like men, it should be under consideration too.

This paper also demonstrates the negative relationship between education and the behavioral dimension of religion. It is obvious that secularization process has significant effects on Muslim individuals' religious behaviors. Because to believe something and to

Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Regression for Educational Effect on Daily Prayer.

	Never vs 5 times		Occasional. vs 5 times		Some daily vs 5 times				
	1 vs 4		2 vs 4		3 vs 4				
	b	Exp(B)	b	Exp(B)	b	Exp(B)			
Intercept	-3.561		-1.4	***	-1.302	**			
Education	0.328	1.389	**	0.196	1.216	*	0.071	1.074	
Raised-Muslim	-0.221	0.801		-0.1	0.905		0.274	1.315	
Male	0.833	2.299	**	0.712	2.038	***	0.381	1.463	*
South	-0.411	0.663		-0.15	0.862		-0.128	0.88	
White	1.441	4.225	***	0.04	1.041		-0.511	0.6	*
Income	0.469	1.599		0.226	1.253		0.091	1.095	
Marital	1.018	2.768	***	0.269	1.309		0.269	1.309	
Age	-0.008	0.992		-0	0.996		0.007	1.007	
N	852								
R²	.05								

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; The reference category is 4.

practice it are different matters in their nature, the results mainly shows that schooling although does not affect the people's religious beliefs and service attendance, it reduces their religious practices which can be accepted the secularization thesis is on the stage for some of religious components.

The degree of religious beliefs, belongings and behaviors are significant determinants for religious groups in terms of their current and future positions in a society. Muslims are a small minority group in the U.S. This study explores the secularization effect on Muslim sample that helps to compare how educational effect distinguishes for Muslims in the U.S than general population. The findings illustrate that parallel findings with previous studies that examines American population (Alam et al., 2018).

It may be expected that; the schooling system should be more influential in the U.S. than other Islamic countries because public and most private schools facilitate secular environments for the students. As minorities, Muslims may have faced many challenging questions, worldviews and situations in the U.S. Therefore, future comparative studies can be useful indicators to examine this issue.

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