Rational Thinking and Forgiveness in Pakistan: The Role of Democratic Values and Mass Media Attitude

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Abstract
Every society has a set of beliefs, norms, values, folkways, mores and laws. All the principles, customs, traditions and procedures of societies are directly or indirectly related to the religion of the society and changed with the passage of time by the mediation of democratic values attitudes and mass media influence. The main objective of the present study is to examine the effects of rational thinking values on forgiveness attitude by the mediation of democratic values and mass media attitude among family members. As many other developing settings, Pakistani society is undergoing a rapid and multifaceted social change, in which traditional thinking coexist and often clash with modern thinking. Rational thinking attitude has great effects on the forgiveness attitude among family members as well as all the members of Pakistani society. For the present study 520 respondents were sampled from two urban areas of Punjab province; Lahore and Faisalabad, through proportionate random sampling technique. A survey method was used as a technique of data collection and an interview schedule was administered to collect information from the respondents. The results support that the net of other factors, favorable democratic values attitudes are positively associated rational thinking attitudes. The results also provide support that all other things equal, mass media attitudes also have a significant positive effect on rational thinking attitudes. Favorable democratic values attitudes have a significant net positive effect and the effect of mass media attitudes is positive and statistically highly significant. It shows that the effects of both democratic values attitudes and mass media attitudes diminish in magnitude when the rational thinking attitudes scale is included. However, the effect of democratic values remains highly significant. In comparison, the effect of mass media attitudes is only marginally significant.

Keywords: Rationality, Forgiveness, Democratic Values, Mass Media, Attitudes, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION
This study examines the effects of modern democratic values and mass media attitude on rational thinking and forgiveness attitudes. As in many other developing settings, the development of industry, new technologies, transportation, and communication system has affected all aspects of Pakistani society. These developments have spurred rapid and multifaceted social change, in which traditional values and orientations coexist and clash with modern ones (Bauman, 1990 and Kluver& Cheong, 2007). Specifically, the proponents of modernization perspectives to development have argued that in Pakistan, as in other developing countries, greater exposure to mass media is associated with more democratic values attitude with more rational thinking and stronger propensity to value forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997).

The eighteenth century revolution had the roots of modernization process and modernity. It was started in Europe based on industrialization and industrial revolution in 1750s. It was the start of the era of modernization (Mikael, 2004). French Revolution (1789) also had its symptoms and was linked
Modernization had different phases. First phase was related to rationality, scientific advancement and growth of production. It was also linked with development, economics, specialization, division of labour, market, industrialization, agricultural activities on the basis of modern tools and techniques, technological advancement and new patterns of life (Cavalli-Sforza et al., 1982). Knowledge sharing activities, environmental control, power and authority, distribution, consumption of goods and services as well as advancement in technology leads societies towards the process of modernization, industrialization, urbanization, secularization, modernity and advancement (Bryjak et al., 1994). There was a great shift of values and traditions with reference to modernization and secularization of the societies. It was improving the human existence in the direction of the new world (Nordas, 2005). The target of the modernity and modernization was to create well being through different dimensions of improvement like economic growth, technology, inventions, discoveries and new patterns of life (Inglehart, 1997). Religious values also promoted these concepts of secularization, modernization, transformation and adoption of new patterns. While on the other hand it also resisted some values and new trends like abortion and some other concepts which were against the cultural values, norms, traditions, and societal customs as well (McGrath, 2004).

Mass media is thought to be an influential spreader of social norms because media represents two important sources of norms, which are important or admired figures in society and public opinion. Successive waves of research have ruled that media may not be successful at telling people what to think, but media is very successful at telling people what other people are thinking (Mutz, 1998). It has been well documented that media involvement has been successfully changed and it nurtures different activities of individual’s life in the field of public health activities, social and cultural norms, values and traditions. It is performing its role to increase awareness about family planning and reproductive health in developing countries and states (Ryserson, 1994). It is shaping biased and intolerated behavior and attitude as well. Its role was encouraged at the time of shaping propaganda during First and Second World Wars (Hovland et al., 1949; Lippman, 1922). The field of communication that grow around the study of mass media offers many important theories of media influence but it does not specialize in the study or measurement of prejudice and conflict as does Psychology (Paluck, 2007). Practitioners of mass media influence prejudice and conflict generally fall into two categories like attempt to arouse and attempt to diminish prejudice and conflict (Frohardt & Temin, 2007). There are countless examples of efforts to use media for reducing prejudice and conflict (Paluck, 2007). Every year government, organizations and corporations relocate millions of dollars into anti-prejudice public service announcements, print, internet publications, television and radio programming (European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2003).

Media encompasses many types of interventions including radio, television, newspaper and internet which may call for different academic considerations of their social and phenomenological dimensions. These social and phenomenological dimensions include watching, listening, reading with another person, group of people, alone, discussing the media program with peers or family and experiences of empathy or imagination. All are differentially associated with watching television, films, reading the internet, or hearing a radio drama. Many of these dimensions such as empathy are thought to play an important role in prejudice reduction (Schecter & Salomon, 2005).

Entertainment-education media is a prominent and widespread approach to media programming for the social good. Entertainment programs are typically soap operas which weave educational messages into the scheme. The main theory is that media can both entertain and educate in order to increase audience and member. It provides knowledge about an educational issue; create favorable attitudes, shift of social norms, transformation and change in explicit behavior (Singhal & Rogers, 2004). According to sociological perspective given by Lang and Gladys (2009) modern communication technology is the most prominent feature to extend relations with family and with other local community members. Some leaders are the central place for all people to communicate each other but now the influence of mass media has changed the notion. Sociological concept of mass media provides...
the clear picture of its importance about the temporary union of choices by geographically dispersed people from different communities (Shuriye, 2011). It expanded the range of general experience among different participants in the groups or mass they attract. Individuals are becoming more responsible to distant events. Much research has been done on the effects of mass media and communication. Mostly mass media provides vital information and sometime internet is considered as a substitute of it for the purpose of news. It serves as the primary source for a major story (Enright et al., 1989 and Holbert & Armfield, 2003).

Every human society has certain values and norms that are very important for the life of individual. These values and norms provide a picture of guidelines for the order and societal control related to behavior and attitude of individual. All individuals depend on the social, economic, cultural as well as religious context of the society; they are a part of living in but related to worldwide perspectives. These values change/vary from area to area, community to community and finally society to society. The importance of these values also changes with importance, intensity and sometime totally lose importance and meaning among society members. Multiple factors are involved such as time, environment, migration and movement of the individuals as well as the transmission of the cultural traits. Existing values are replaced and sometimes lost their meaning for society members (Saroglou et al., 2004). Factors working behind this phenomenon are the development and transformation of societies into different new dimensions like science, inventions, discoveries, use of technology, migration, urbanization, industrialization, and economic growth and some other relevant factors. These factors have a strong influence on the existing values and in the process of their change.

Figure 1. Conceptual model

Based on the conceptual model, I formulate the following hypothesis with respect to rational thinking attitude:

**Hypothesis 1.** Favorable attitude towards democratic values will have a positive effect on rational thinking attitude.

**Hypothesis 2.** Mass media attitude is supportive to rational thinking attitude among family members. With respect to attitude towards forgiveness, hypotheses are as follows:

**Hypothesis 3.** Favorable attitudes towards democratic values attitude will be associated with increased awareness of forgiveness attitude.

**Hypothesis 4.** Stronger mass media attitude will be positively associated with forgiveness attitude.

**Hypothesis 5.** The hypothesized effects of favorable democratic values attitude and of mass media attitude on progressive forgiveness attitude will be mediated by rational thinking among family members.

**DATA AND METHODS**

I used the data from a representative survey conducted in two urban areas of Punjab province, Lahore and Faisalabad, Pakistan. Five towns in Lahore and two towns in Faisalabad were selected using multi-stage random sampling technique. Complete lists of households were obtained from concerned union councils and households were randomly selected from those lists. One adult between ages 20-60 years was interviewed from each household. The interview questionnaire was administered face to face, including sections on: a) socio-demographic characteristics; b) democratic values and attitude; c) mass media attitude; d) rational thinking attitude; and e) forgiveness attitude. On the questions measuring
values and attitudes, respondents were asked to express their (dis)agreement with certain relevant statements on a 5-level Likert scale. The measurement instrument was pretested on 30 randomly selected respondents to check the workability, reliability and validity before the actual data collection. To address the research questions and to test hypothesis, I fit three OLS regression models. In the first model, the outcome is what we define as rational thinking attitudes. This predictor is an ordinal scale that was constructed using the following items from the survey: whether or not social system should be competent to punish evil doers; whether or not the merit based system of reward and punishment brings prosperity in society; whether or not we should treat others fairly; whether or not better socialization of children is the primary duty of parents. The predictors are two ordinal scales-democratic values attitudes and mass media attitudes. The scale of attitudes toward democratic values and attitudes is constructed from the following items of the survey: whether or not in family both male and female are involved in decision making; whether or not there is no gender discrimination in family; whether or not family gives equal importance to son and daughter for education. The scale of mass media attitudes is constructed using the following survey items: whether or not mass media provides knowledge about religion; whether or not mass media has changed the world into global village; whether or not use of mobile phone reduces distances and facilitates social contacts. The control variables are respondent’s gender, age, number of children, family type (extended vs. nuclear), respondent’s educational level, household monthly (income is recoded in 1000s), and district of residence.

In the second model, the outcome is an ordinal scale that measures respondent’s attitudes to forgiveness. The scale is based on the following items: family encouraged each other to take responsibility for hurtful actions; thinking that admitting fault is a sign of greatness; and apologize if we heat each other promote cohesiveness among group/family members. Here, the predictors and controls are the same as in the first model. Finally, in the third model, we add the scale of rational thinking attitudes to test whether these attitudes mediate the effects of the two predictors-democratic values attitudes and mass media attitudes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
The sample was more or less evenly split male and female respondents, and between nuclear and extended households. Educational level ranged from illiterate to master and above, but overall this urban sample was rather well educated, reflecting relatively high levels of education in these largely middle class communities. More than half of the respondents’ household income per month was above 40,000 rupees and has more than three children living in nuclear family system.

Table 2 presents the results of the multivariate OLS regression model predicting rational thinking attitude (parameter estimates and standard errors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mass media attitude</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic values &amp; attitude</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female [reference: male]</td>
<td>-.543</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of the respondents</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of children</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family [reference: nuclear]</td>
<td>-.154</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level of respondents</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisalabad [reference: Lahore]</td>
<td>-.434</td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>11.283</td>
<td>.990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>520</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the results of the multivariate OLS regression model predicting rational thinking attitudes. The results support Hypothesis 1: net of other factors, favorable democratic values attitudes...
are positively associated rational thinking attitudes. The results also provide support to Hypothesis 2: all other things equal, mass media attitudes also have a significant positive effect on rational thinking attitudes.

Working together as individuals, communities and nations, people need each other to solve their problems. Everyone needs to look for non-violent solutions to conflict and further to the growing reception of human rights and diversity. They must remind themselves that order imposed by force has historically proven short lived. By contrast universal responsibility is based on the dynamics and role of their inner world, of realization and spirit, of their hearts and minds (Macionis, 2006). Today individually and as communities and nations, everybody considers his needs in relation to the need. This is the foundation for genuine peace and harmony and the path that will allow everybody to move beyond war and violence as the means they use to resolve differences. Religion is valuable but may be necessary or not and it is not so that religion is relevant to the modern world. Religion has often been a source of conflict and solidarity in human societies. Religious conflict is a real issue in unified world today. People with diverse beliefs and practices come in close contact. The key to overcome such conflict is promoting religious harmony (Sarglou et al., 2004).

At the same time religious values and norms become important and significant among all society members. The values were transforming with the process of modernization and secularization. The concept of modern lifestyle was changing upwardly. People were getting more awareness about different aspects of life (Truett et al., 1992). At one side religious values were declining and on the other side it was also improving different aspects of life. All the evils and crimes were minimizing with the concept of rationality and democratic attitude.

The concept of democracy is emerging and democratic attitude is developing among members of the society. People are thinking rationally. Every event of their life, they get different kinds of help from different channels of information. All past concepts of evils are replacing with positive thinking among society members. The concept of killing of individual and violation of human rights are changing with the passage of time (Paluck, 2007).

Every society has a set of beliefs, norms, values, folkways, mores, laws and some religion. All the principles, customs, traditions and procedures of societies are directly or indirectly related to the religion of the society. Religion guides individuals to perform duties, roles and also present guidelines to control behavior at different situations in a society. Religious feelings promote social interaction among society members. On the basis of social interaction, individuals show good character and feeling towards each other. Religion creates cohesion, solidarity, integration, and equilibrium among society members. It also leads to the smooth running of society. The concept of reward and punishment promotes social order in society.

Attributes of a religion is the aggregate of religious practices, values and beliefs which society members or different community members hold sacred in their life (Kammeyer et al., 1994). Value concept is demarcated while mentioning religious values commonly. The tendency to show behavior at different points/situation of life and moral standards are related to the values of society (Ester et al., 1993). Values are the guidelines for motivation for specific attributes, norms and behavior that individual show in their groups. There is the pattern of desirability, very important and valuable identification in the life of the individuals (Giddens, 2001). It helps to create difference between right and wrong, good and bad (Ester et al., 1993). On the basis of these values of religion individuals builds their character, attitude, behavior and opinions (Nazri et al., 2011).

The first section of Table 3 (Section A) presents the results of a regression model that predicts forgiveness attitudes from democratic values attitudes and mass media attitudes, while controlling for the same characteristics as in the previous model. Here again, favorable democratic values attitudes have a significant net positive effect, yielding support for Hypothesis 3. Likewise the effect of mass media attitudes is positive and statistically highly significant, which support Hypothesis 4.

Finally, Section B of Table 3 displays the results of a model that tests for mediating effects of rational thinking attitudes on forgiveness attitudes. It shows that the effects of both democratic values attitudes and mass media attitudes diminish in magnitude when the rational thinking attitudes scale is included.
However, the effect of democratic values remains highly significant. In comparison, the effect of mass media attitudes is now only marginally significant. Hence, Hypothesis 5 is only partially supported.

Table 3: Multivariate OLS regression model predicting progressive forgiveness attitudes (parameter estimates and standard errors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media attitude</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic values &amp; attitude</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational thinking attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female [reference: male]</td>
<td>-.223</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of the respondents</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of children</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family [reference: nuclear]</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level of respondents</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisalabad [reference: Lahore]</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.570</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>520</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion is transmitted from one generation to the next, from area to the other through preaching and guidance, with the help of mass media, books and many other resources. It also transforms through the process of learning, socialization of children and family members. It unifies values, moral codes, morality, integration, rituals, traditions emotions, behavior, and attitude of society members to create cohesiveness, solidarity, integration and equilibrium among society members and in society. (Hinde, 1999)

Religion is a set of rules and regulations which guide individuals about good and bad, wrong and right, truth and lie etc. Religious values are accepted at large level like Holy books, leaders, values which cause universal culture. The aim/objective of religion is to make people respect humanity, to instill the trait of forgiveness, tolerance, justice, honesty, zakat and charity and all the acts which create harmony in the society (Tamney, 1980).

Spiritual qualities are best developed in the context of religious practices. Spiritual qualities of compassion, peace, patience and tolerance are necessary. Religion is an extremely effective instrument for achieving happiness (Fincham, 2000). It persuades a sense of responsibility toward others, offers support for developing ethical discipline and it is also concerned with addressing human suffering in a fundamental way (Altos, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Every society has a set of beliefs, norms, values, folkways, mores, laws and some religion. All the principles, customs, traditions and procedures of societies are directly or indirectly related to the religion of the society and changed with the passage of time by the mediation of democratic values attitudes and mass media influence. These concepts develop the idea of rational thinking among family members and results towards forgiveness attitudes. Rewards and punishment mentioned in the scriptures stimulated the religious followers to do good quality acts and activities and stay away from negative behaviors. Peace, tranquility, harmony, calmness, nobility and real greatness could be achieved in this world and the hereafter by following noble life and teachings of religion. Forgiveness is the feeling of change, manners and emotions related to criminal activities and also related to the victim and his or her complete acknowledgment on the deserved basis and better management. There are some intended and non-intended, intentional procedures which are founded by choices and options to forget and forgive.
REFERENCES


