What makes Emerging Adults Altruistic, Empathic & Helping: Do Religiosity and Moral identity Symbolization plays a role?

Dr. Sukhamjit Kaur*
Department of Psychology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India.
Email: sukhamjitkaurdall@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present research explored whether religiosity and moral identity symbolization have an impact on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness. The sample consisted of 500 emerging adults (females) with ages ranging from 18- 24 years old. A convenient sampling method was used for data collection. The religiosity Scale devised by Bhushan (1970) was used to assess religiosity. The moral identity symbolization dimension of the Moral Identity Inventory (Aquino & Reed, 2002) was used to measure moral identity symbolization. Self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness were measured by Prosocial Personality Battery introduced by Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, (1995). The data was analyzed by a 2×2 analysis of variance. After the computation of results, it was found that religiosity and moral identity symbolization interacted with each other to produce a combined effect on self-reported altruism and helpfulness. Moreover, participants high and low on moral identity symbolization differed significantly from each other with regard to mean scores of self-reported altruism and helpfulness. Religiosity also has a significant effect on prosociality.

Keywords: religiosity; moral identity symbolization; emerging adults; self-reported altruism; empathy; helpfulness**.**

1. Introduction

The present study aimed to explore how religiosity and moral identity symbolization influence self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness. As it is evident from the literature review that there has been a lot of research on each pair but so far, no study in the Indian setting has tried to explore systematically how the individual level of religiosity along with different levels of moral identity symbolization influences altruisms, empathy and helping behavior.

Religiosity has been theorized in psychology since the mid of the 20th century by All port (1950). Some scholars define religiosity and spirituality distinctively but simultaneously they believe that it is difficult to polarize these two constructs (Nadal, Hardy, & Barry, 2018). Clark (1958) defined religion as "the inner experience of the individual when he senses a beyond, especially as evidenced by the effect of this experience on his behavior when he actively attempts to harmonize his life with the beyond".

According to Arnett (2000), emerging adulthood extends from late teens through twenties. During this period of development apart from love and work, another ideology also develops that is "world view" (Arnett, 2004). According to Arnett (2004), a worldview can be described as "a way of making sense of the world". Worldview incorporates religious beliefs along with moral principles, which act as a guide in the decision-making process in everyday social situations. He further explained that the world view fully develops during emerging adulthood because of increased capacity for abstract thinking about the questions of the world view which consists of questions regarding beliefs about the origin of life; the existence of the soul; the existence of supernatural beings & destiny after death. Emerging adulthood is a period when the internalization of beliefs, which are concordant with their religious orientation, takes place.

Baron, Byrne, and Branscombe (2005) defined prosocial behavior as "helping actions that benefit other people without necessarily providing any direct benefits to the person performing the act and may involve a risk for the person that helps". Prosocial behavior is a multidimensional construct. The dimensions of prosocial behavior considered for present research are self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness as proposed by Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, (1995)

Batson (2011) conceptualized altruism as "a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare". The prerequisite for the behavior to be called altruistic

is that it must be intentional. Unintentional incidental helping is not considered an altruistic act (Draguns, 2007). Penner (1995) defined altruism as "an innate capacity to be tapped rather than something that must be framed out of rocky soil of egoism". Altruistic motivation aims to enhance and preserve the welfare of other beings but it is different from egoistic motivation which is related to the maintenance of one's own welfare (Sturmer & Snyder, 2010).

Empathy in the broadest sense may range from the cognitive component to the affective component (Hoffman, 2011). The cognitive component of empathy can be considered as a reaction at the intellectual level or "an ability simply to understand other person's perspective" (Davis, 1983). It is also referred to as role-taking abilities. The affective component refers to understanding the emotional reaction (visceral reaction resulting from physiological arousal) of other individuals (Davis, 1983). Another oriented empathy involves motivation that is directed towards another person's protection and it also involves the sacrifice of an individual's own benefit for the sake of another individual's welfare (De wall, 2007). Empathy makes a person more capable to feel exactly the same as what another person is feeling.

Helping behavior may be defined as taking care of less fortunate others and distributing knowledge and expertise with others. This behavior is purely voluntary in nature (Leeuwen, & Tauber, 2010).

Religiosity is considered an important factor in promoting prosocial behavior. Religiosity also escalates compassion and cooperation. According to the dimensional model of religiousness proposed by Saroglou (2011) religiosity is composed of four components, namely Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging which are interconnected. Religiosity influences prosocial behavior and this notion is well explained by an "Integrated Model" proposed by Durrant & Poppelwell (2017). "Integrated model" explains that the four key components of religiousness i.e. Believing, Behaving, Belonging and Binding are associated with prosocial behavior through religious components such as supernatural beliefs, supernatural punishment, costly signaling theory, and religious specific norm and values.

The term moral identity was first introduced by Blasi (1983) in his "Self-Model" of moral functioning. Moral identity from a social cognitive perspective was defined by Aquino & Reed (2002) as "Self-conception organized around a set of moral traits". Moral identity has been considered as a source of moral motivation and hence it is a critical predictor of moral behavior (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Development of moral identity entails the basic phenomena of integration of morality and personal concerns

(Cobly & Damon, 1992) and this usually gets initiated during adolescent years and continues in emerging adult years. According to Blasi & Goldis (1995) during emerging adult years, the identity observed mode undergoes the transition to management of identity. Identity observed is marked by the genesis of identity (Blasi, 1988), and before this stage identity is considered as a mere reflection of external appearances and interpersonal relations. It can be considered that self, prior to identity observed is diffused and is hidden in a person's actions, whereas with the origin of identity observed self-starts to "be extracted from actions" (Blasi, 1988). This mode undergoes a shift during emerging adult years and is called management of identity. During this mode, more emphasis is laid on internalized standards, goals, values & beliefs. This mode is characterized by fidelity in action and self-consistency which are the core principles of moral identity (Krettenauer & Hertz, 2015). Therefore, it can be concluded that moral identity develops during emerging adult years and children do not experience cohesion of self & morality as seen in adolescent and emerging adult years.

2. Objectives

The present study was planned with the following objectives

1. To study the main effect of religiosity on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness.
2. To study the main effect of moral identity symbolization on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness.
3. To study the interactive effect of religiosity and moral identity symbolization on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness.

3. Hypothesis

Based on the previous literature following hypotheses were framed.

1. Religiosity will produce a significant main effect on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness. High religious individuals will be high on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and will be more helpful as compared to low religious individuals.
2. Moral identity symbolization will produce a significant main effect on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness. The participants with higher moral

identity symbolization will be high on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy & helpfulness as compared to participants with lower levels of symbolic moral identity.
3. It is hypothesized that the interactive effect of religiosity and moral identity symbolization on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness is purely exploratory in nature.

4. Materials and Methods

The sample consisted of 500 female participants in the age ranging from 18-24 years doing graduation/ post-graduation from seven colleges of Amritsar, Punjab (India) namely, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur College for Women, Amritsar; Trai Shatabdi Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College, Amritsar; Khalsa College, Amritsar; Khalsa College for Women, Amritsar; Shahzada Nand College, Amritsar; Hindu College, Amritsar and Khalsa College of Law, Amritsar. The convenient (incidental) sampling technique was used to collect the data.

4.1. Procedure

The participants were asked to fill the consent form and were instructed to fill the questionnaire honestly. All participants were administered Religiosity Questionnaire, Moral Identity Inventory after giving instructions. On the basis of the scores of religiosity, categorization of the participants into two groups, i.e. high scorers on religiosity and low scorers on religiosity was done using the criterion of Mean ± 0.61 SD (27% cases in each group). The mean religiosity score of 500 participants came out to be 135.292 and SD is 13.29. After applying the criterion, participants having scores of 143.39 and above were taken in the high group, and participants having scores of 127.18 and below were taken in the low group. Each group consisted of 122 participants. The 122 participants in each group were also further categorized into two groups on the basis of moral identity symbolization scores using Criterion Mean ± 0.61 SD (27% cases in each group). The participants who had scores of 5.02 and above were included in the high religious and high moral identity symbolization group and participants having scores of 3.41 and below were kept in the high religious and low moral identity symbolization group. The participants who had scores of 4.90 and above were included in the low religious and high moral identity symbolization group. Similarly, the

participants having scores of 3.42 and below were taken in low religious and low moral identity symbolization group. The final group consisted of 23 participants.

4.2 Measures

Religiosity Scale (Bhushan, 1970)

Religiosity was assessed by Religiosity Scale (Bhushan, 1970). There is a total of 36 items. 25 items are positive and 11 are negative items. The range of scores varies from 180 to 36. High scores indicated high religiosity and low scores indicated low religiosity. The split-half reliability of the scale reported by the author is 0.82 and the test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.78.

Moral Identity Inventory (Aquino & Reed, 2002)

The construct of moral identity was assessed by Moral Identity Inventory (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Moral identity inventory has items pertaining to moral identity symbolization such as "I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics". It is a seven-point Likert-type scale. Against each item, seven responses are given in order, such that 7 indicates "strongly agree" and 1 indicates "strongly disagree". There is a total of 5 items measuring moral identity symbolization. The coefficient alpha for moral identity symbolization is 0.80 as reported by the author.

Prosocial Personality Battery (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger & Friefeld, 1995)

The Short version of Prosocial Personality Battey (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger & Friefeld, 1995) was used for measuring self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness.

a) Self-reported Altruism

This scale measures the altruistic behavior of participants. Items pertaining to the participant's self-reported altruism are included in this scale such as "I have helped carry a stranger belonging (e.g., books, parcels, etc.)." It is a five-point Likert type scale. There was a total of 5 items. The coefficient alpha for self-reported altruism was 0.73 as reported by the author and 0.72 for the present sample.

b) Other Oriented Empathy

This factor of prosocial personality battery is made up of 22 items. These include items measuring social responsibility, empathic concern, perspective taking, mutual concern moral reasoning, and other-oriented moral reasoning. The total scores on this factor are obtained by summing the scores on social responsibility, empathic concern, perspective taking, mutual concern moral reasoning, and other-oriented moral reasoning.

c) Helpfulness refers to the tendency to provide help to needy individuals and groups of individuals. This factor is scored by summing personal distress scores and the scores on self-reported altruism. The scores on personal distress are obtained by reversing the scores on 1 item of the personal distress scale, i.e. "I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies". After reverse scoring of this item, the total score on personal distress is computed and subtracted from 18. This makes the meaning of high scorers on the helpfulness factor clearer because scores on two scales represent the prosocial tendencies.

4.3 Research Design

To investigate the main and interactive effects of religiosity and moral identity symbolization (high and low) on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness the data was treated by two-way ANOVA. A 2×2 factorial design involving two levels of religiosity (high & low) and two levels of moral identity symbolization (high & low) was used to investigate the main and interactive effects of independent variables on the dependent variables.

The Duncan multiple range tests were applied for a pairwise comparison of means involved in significant interactions found during two-way ANOVA.

The effect size was measured by Omega squared (ω2) so as to compute the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable

5. Results

SPSS version 19 was used in the study for the data analysis. The data were tested for various assumptions required to be met before running a two-way analysis of variance. Levene's test was also used to check the assumption of homogeneity of

variance. The results indicated that the variance was the same across the comparison groups except a few.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity symbolization (B) for Self-reported altruism (n=23).

Religiosity	Moral Identity Symbolization	Mean	Std. Deviation
High Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	19.21	4.04
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	14.43	4.93
	Total	16.82	5.07
Low Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	14.04	4.98
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	13.65	5.38
	Total	13.84	5.13
Total	High Moral Identity Symbolization	16.63	5.19
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	14.04	5.12
	Total	15.33	5.29

Table 2: Results of Analysis of Variance for Self-Reported Altruism: Religiosity (A) ×Moral Identity Symbolization (B) groups (n=23)

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SS	df	MS	F
Religiosity (A)	204.011	1	204.011	8.632**
Moral Identity Symbolization (B)	153.924	1	153.924	6.513*
A ×□B	110.880	1	110.880	4.692*
Within (Error)	2079.739	88		

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Table 1 and 2 clearly summarizes the mean self-reported altruism scores for high (M=16.82, SD= 5.074) and low (M=13.84, SD= 5.133) condition of the religiosity factor differed significantly beyond the 0.01 level: $F(1, 88) = 8.632$; $p<0.01$. Therefore, the religiosity factor had a significant main effect which indicated that participants having high religiosity also had high scores on self-reported altruism as compared to low religious participants. The calculated value of omega squared for this analysis was 0.070 which, according to Keppel (1991) is medium effect size. Therefore, 7.0 % of the total variance in self-reported altruism was explained by religiosity.

Table 1 also indicates that the mean of self-reported altruism scores for high (M=16.63, SD= 5.19) and low (M=14.043, SD= 5.120) condition of the moral identity symbolization factor differed significantly beyond the 0.05 level: $F(1, 88) = 6.513$; $p<0.05$. Therefore, the moral identity symbolization factor had a significant main effect which indicated that participants having high moral identity symbolization also had high scores on self-report altruism as compared to participants having low scores on moral identity symbolization.

The calculated value of omega squared for this analysis was (0.051) which, according to Keppel (1991) is small effect size. Therefore, approximately 5.1 % of the total variance in self-reported altruism was explained by the independent variable moral identity symbolization.

Table 2 further confirmed that the interaction effect for religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B) was also statistically significant: $F (1, 88) = 4.692$; $p<0.05$. Therefore religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B) did interact significantly with each other so as to produce their combined effect on self-reported altruism.

Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to explore the significance of the difference between means involved in the interactive effect of religiosity and moral identity symbolization. The results of this interaction are reported in table 3.

Table 3: Significance of differences between means for Self-Reported Altruism by Duncan's Multiple Range Test: Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) interaction (n= 23).

		A_2B_2	A_2B_1	A_1B_2	A_1B_1
	Mean	13.65	14.04	14.43	19.21
A_2B_2	13.65		0.39	0.78	5.56**
A_2B_1	14.04			0.39	5.17**
A_1B_2	14.43				4.78**
A_1B_1	19.21				

$P^{**}< 0.01$, $P^{*}<0.05$

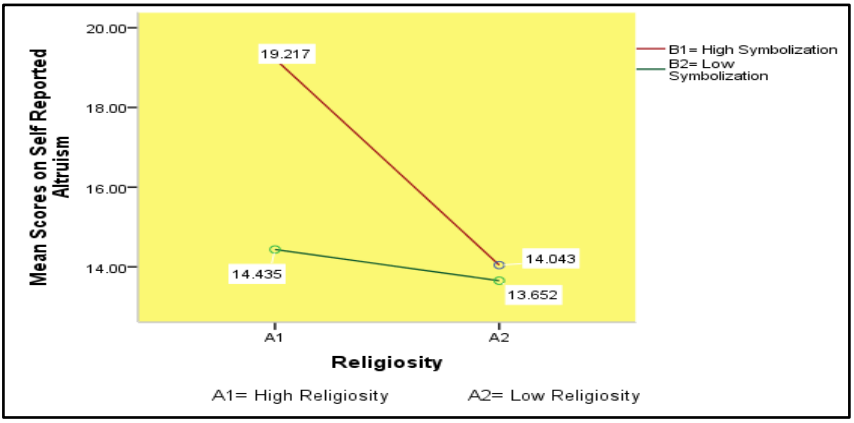
A_1B_1 = High Religiosity and High Moral Identity Symbolization

A_1B_2= High Religiosity and Low Moral Identity Symbolization

A_2B_1= Low Religiosity and High Moral Identity Symbolization

A_2B_2= Low Religiosity and Low Moral Identity Symbolization

Fig. 1: Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) on Self-Reported Altruism



The significant comparisons reported in table 3 indicated that highly religious participants with high moral identity symbolization had higher scores ($p<0.01$) as

compared to low religious participants with low moral identity symbolization for self-reported altruism. The pairwise comparison also revealed that high religious participants along with higher levels of moral identity symbolization had higher scores ($p<0.01$) as compared to low religious participants with high moral identity symbolization. Further, it was revealed that high religious participants along with higher levels of moral identity symbolization had better scores ($p<0.01$) than high religious participants having low moral identity symbolization.

The value of omega squared was 0.034 which indicated a small effect size according to Keppel (1991). Therefore, only 3.4% of the total variance in the self-reported altruism was explained by the interactive effect of religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B).

Other Oriented Empathy

The data for other oriented empathy was analysed by two-way analysis of variance. Means and Standard Deviations of Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) for other oriented empathy are summarised in table 4.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) for other oriented empathy (n=23)

Religiosity	Moral identity Symbolization	Mean	Std. Deviation
High Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	81.26	8.12
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	74.95	17.36
	Total	78.10	13.77
Low Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	66.78	10.80
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	62.95	10.96
	Total	64.86	10.93
Total	High Moral Identity Symbolization	74.02	11.95
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	68.95	15.58
	Total	71.48	13.04

Table 5: Results of Analysis of Variance for Other Oriented Empathy: Religiosity (A) ×Moral Identity Symbolization (B) groups (n=23)

SOURCE OF VARIATION	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**
Religiosity (A)	4031.315	1	4031.315	26.677***
Moral Identity Symbolization (B)	590.098	1	590.098	3.905
A × B	35.315	1	35.315	0.234
Within (Error)	13298.261	88		

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 4 and 5 clearly depicts that the mean of other-oriented empathy scores for high (M=78.10, SD= 13.77) and low (M=64.86, SD= 10.93) condition of the religiosity factor differed significantly beyond the 0.001 level: $F(1, 88) = 26.67$; $p<0.001$. Therefore, the religiosity factor had a significant main effect which indicated that participants having high religiosity also had high scores on other-oriented empathy as compared to low religious participants.

The calculated value of omega squared is 0.214 which, according to Keppel (1991) is large effect size. Therefore, we conclude that approximately 21.4 % of the total variance in other-oriented empathy was explained by religiosity.

Table 5 indicated that the main effect of the variable moral identity symbolization was statistically insignificant. Therefore, moral identity symbolization did not produce any significant independent effect on other-oriented empathy.

Table 5 further confirmed that both variables, religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B) did not interact significantly with each other.

Helpfulness

The data for helpfulness was analysed by two-way analysis of variance. Means and Standard Deviations of Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) for helpfulness are depicted in table 6.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations of Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) for Helpfulness (n=23).

Religiosity	Symbolization	Mean	Std. Deviation
High Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	28.78	4.48
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	23.17	5.41
	Total	25.97	5.67
Low Religiosity	High Moral Identity Symbolization	23.13	5.61
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	22.34	6.09
	Total	22.73	5.80
Total	High Moral Identity Symbolization	25.95	5.78
	Low Moral Identity Symbolization	22.76	5.71
	Total	24.35	5.93

Table 7: Results of Analysis of Variance for Helpfulness: Religiosity (A) ×Moral Identity Symbolization (B) groups (n=23).

SOURCE OF VARIATION	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**
Religiosity (A)	241.315	1	241.315	8.171**
Moral Identity Symbolization (B)	234.880	1	234.880	7.953**
A × B	133.924	1	133.924	4.534*
Within (Error)	2599.043	88		

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Table 6 and 7 clearly depicts that the mean of helpfulness scores for high (M=25.97, SD= 5.67) and low (M=22.73, SD= 5.80) condition of the religiosity factor differed significantly beyond the 0.001 level: $F(1, 88) = 8.171$; $p<0.001$. Therefore, the religiosity factor had a significant main effect, which indicated that participants having high religiosity also had high scores on helpfulness as compared to low religious participants.

The obtained value of omega squared was 0.065, which, according to Keppel (1991) is medium effect size. Therefore, 6.5 % of the total variance in helpfulness was explained by religiosity.

Table 6 and 7 clarifies that the mean of helpfulness scores for high (M=25.95, SD= 5.78) and low (M=22.76, SD= 5.71) condition of the moral identity symbolization factor differed significantly beyond the 0.001 level: $F(1, 88) = 7.953$; $p<0.001$. Therefore, the moral identity symbolization factor had a significant main effect, which indicated that participants having high symbolic moral identity also had high scores on helpfulness as compared to participants low on symbolic moral identity.

The calculated value of omega squared is 0.063 which according to Keppel (1991) is medium effect size. Therefore approximately 6.3 % of the total variance in helpfulness was explained by moral identity symbolization.

Table 6 and 7 further confirmed that the interaction effect for religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B) was also statistically significant: $F(1, 88) = 4.534$; $p<0.05$. Therefore religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B) did interact significantly with each other so as to produce their combined effect on helpfulness.

Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to explore the significance of the difference between means involved in the interactive effect of religiosity and moral identity symbolization. The results of this interaction are reported in table 8.

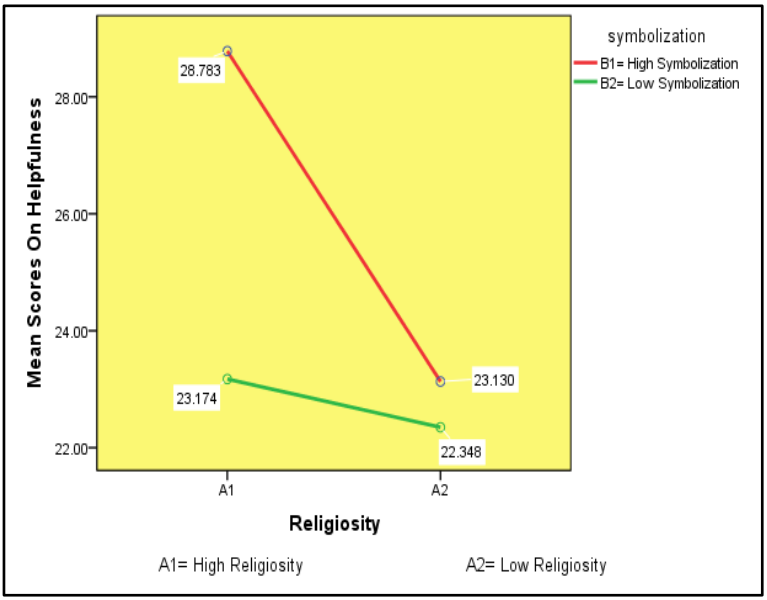
Table 8: Significance of differences between means for Helpfulness by Duncan's Multiple Range Test: Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) interaction (n= 23)

		A_2B_2	A_2B_1	A_1B_2	A_1B_1
	Mean	22.34	23.13	23.17	28.78
A_2B_2	22.34		0.79	0.83	6.44**
A_2B_1	23.13			0.04	5.65**
A_1B_2	22.17				5.61**
A_1B_1	28.78				

$P^{**}< 0.01$, $P^{*}<0.05$

A_1B_1 = High Religiosity and High Moral Identity Symbolization
A_1B_2= High Religiosity and Low Moral Identity Symbolization
A_2B_1= Low Religiosity and High Moral Identity Symbolization
A_2B_2= Low Religiosity and Low Moral Identity Symbolization

Fig. 30: Religiosity (A) × Moral Identity Symbolization (B) on Helpfulness



The significant comparisons reported in table 8 indicated that highly religious participants with high moral identity symbolization had higher scores (P<0.01) as compared to low religious participants with low moral identity symbolization for helpfulness. The pairwise comparison also revealed that high religious participants along with higher levels of moral identity symbolization had higher scores (P< 0.01) as compared to low religious participants with high moral identity symbolization. Further, it was revealed that high religious participants along with higher levels of moral identity symbolization had better scores (P< 0.01) than high religious participants having low moral identity symbolization.

The value of omega squared for this analysis was 0.032 which indicated a small effect size according to Keppel (1991). Therefore, only 3.2% of the total variance in the helpfulness was explained by the interactive effect of religiosity (A) and moral identity symbolization (B).

6. Discussion

The main aim of the study was to explore the effect of religiosity and moral identity symbolization on self-reported altruism, other-oriented empathy, and helpfulness. The results of the present study support hypothesis 1 thus confirming that high religiosity makes the emerging adults more altruistic and more empathic. The present research also sheds light that high religiosity fosters helping behavior. The results of the present study are in accordance with the Integrated Model proposed by Durrant & Poppelwell (2017) which explains that religious beliefs and practices lead to prosociality through the concept of supernatural beliefs and supernatural punishments. "Religious beliefs and practices" is the universal dimension of religiousness according to the big four religious dimensions proposed by Saroglou (2011).

The main factor that may be responsible for altruistic behavior among believers is cognitive awareness of God which further facilitates reputational concerns. Easy cognitive accessibility of thoughts of supernatural powers among religious adherents also plays a great role while making prosocial decisions. Highly religious individuals mobilize a high level of trust and cooperation as compared to other individuals. The finding is in concordance with the results reported by Brooks (2003). Moreover, high religious individuals have a strong personal relationship with God, which further motivates altruistic tendencies, because such individuals have tendencies to spread love and help that they have experienced personally from God. Religiosity also leads to the

development of firm faith that God himself is helping and they get motivated to love and help others because they themselves have received help from God. Therefore, the sense of love and security that is received from God promotes altruistic tendencies. It has also been observed that religious congregations provide communal support and such social networks, decrease the intellectual and social distance, thereby promoting closeness among the members of these congregations and ultimately enhancing the selfless help to other members (Pessi, 2011). Moreover, religiosity proliferates the altruistic tendencies beyond biological kinship (Sukhamjit Kaur, 2020)

Moreover, religiosity enhances other-oriented empathy. The probable reason for the same can be explained by the activity of mirror neurons. Religious congregations provide the chances of activation of mirroring neurons because similar rituals are performed by all the believers. Hence, when similar action is performed by two individuals, then they become able to comprehend each other's cognitive and affective states (Memon, Treur, 2012). Highly religious individuals are more helpful because religious teachings infuse the concept of afterlives among believers. They think that helping others will lead them to a high quality of afterlife i.e. heaven (Cnaan & Boddie, 2002).

Moral identity symbolization produced the significant main effect on self-reported altruism; participants having high scores on moral identity symbolization had high scores on self-reported altruism as compared to participants having low scores on moral identity symbolization. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted for the self-reported altruism dimension of prosocial behavior.

The moral identity symbolization represents the public dimensions of moral identity and may be defined as "the degree to which people tend to convey their moral identity externally through their actions in the world". Moral identity symbolization motivates individuals to donate for prosocial causes because of basic human need of self-expression (Reed, Kay, Finnel, Aquino & Levy, 2016). Moreover, individuals high on symbolization have a tendency to engage themselves in the activities that are either visible or are able to convey their moral commitments to others, thus such individuals believe in the public display of their morality (Winterich, Aquino, Mittal & Swartz, 2013). The participants having a high level of symbolization reported more altruistic behavior as compared to participants low on moral identity symbolization. Although the altruistic behavior is performed without the anticipation of any reward and the symbolization is a public dimension of moral identity as individuals high on moral identity symbolization want recognition of their behavior in the public which is contrary

to the altruistic behavior. So, these results appear puzzling at first, but when probed about the relationship between symbolization and altruism, it was found that this relationship can be explained by the costly signaling theory which was first introduced by a biologist of Israel named Zahavi (1975). According to costly signaling theory, costly signals help an individual to transmit honest information about the behavior pattern of an individual to the members of the group which may be helpful to the individual during unforeseen future times of need. Moreover, such individuals may also believe that, if they will share their resources with others selflessly then they are more likely to receive help from the other individuals, when they may become sick or injured in the future. According to Winterich, Aquino, Mittal & Swartz (2013) the recognizable prosocial behavior is motivated by moral identity symbolization.

Moral identity symbolization produced a significant main effect on the factor of prosocial behavior namely: helpfulness, therefore participants having a high score on symbolization also had high scores on helpfulness as compared to participants low on moral identity symbolization. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted for the helpfulness factor of prosocial behavior.

The symbolization dimension of moral identity seems to motivate the prosocial or helping behavior through the desire of being recognized for one's prosocial behavior. When the helping behavior is recognized, then it can help in the elevation of one's status within their community. It may also be helpful in changing the other's attitude towards them in a favorable way such that they become known for their trustworthiness and helpful attitude. Moreover, when people are able to generate prosocial perceptions among the community members, it further helps these people to get rewards from the others due to their prosocial contribution towards the group. So major outcomes of demonstrating prosocial behavior in the group lead to status elevation and such individuals can gain material rewards. Apart from the material rewards, such people are able to fulfill their basic need of projecting an accurate portrayal of themselves to others. Therefore, it can be concluded that moral identity symbolization motivates the prosocial behavior due to the strong desire of such individuals to get recognition and their desire to verify an important facet of the self through the reflected appraisal of others (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). The results are in line with the study conducted by Gotowiec & VanMastrigt (2018).

The religiosity and moral identity symbolization interacted with each other in their effects on self-reported altruism and helpfulness. The results revealed that participants high on religiosity along with high levels of moral identity symbolization

were more altruistic and more helpful. Therefore, after testing hypothesis 3, it was found that religiosity and moral identity symbolization interacted with each other to produce the combined effect on self-reported altruism and helpfulness.

The results are consistent with the views of Hart & Atkins (2011), who described that religious participation; moral identity, and community service (prosociality) are strongly linked with each other.

According to Hardy, Walker, Rackham & Olsen (2012), religious beliefs and practices have a facilitative role in the development of morality and it also fosters identity formation which further leads to behavioral changes such as helping and volunteering. Indeed, it is believed that religiosity influences the development of moral identity, thus during the period of emerging adulthood religiosity, morality, and identity become more ideological. Moreover, religious congregations become the source to display one's moral ideal self to others. According to Reynolds & Ceramic (2007) high moral identity symbolization was responsible for making people more helpful, especially under the influence of social consensus relating to moral issues. Shao, Aquino & Freeman (2008) found that the salience of moral identity to self-concept had an association with a helping attitude. Those participants who were high on moral identity were more helpful. According to Hunter (2010), religiosity along with high moral identity was responsible for prosocial acts.

Hart & Atkins (2011) proposed a model and located various sources of linkage between religious participation and moral identity.

The paths of the moral identity developmental model which are related to religion mainly involve moral judgment. Moral judgment is considered "a set of cognitive processes that regulate social behavior". Religious participation provides an excellent context in which people may acquire sophisticated moral reasoning more easily than individuals who do not participate in religious activities. In the religious congregation, the people can discuss moral issues with one and another and hence get a platform for the development of sophisticated moral judgment. According to this model, moral identity has consequences for social functioning. Moral identity is linked to social capital and individual resilience in the community. It has been documented by previous research that people who have high moral identity are involved more in prosocial activities than individuals low on moral identity. Hart & Atkin (2011) in the Developmental Model of moral identity ascertain that the above notion is consistent with the concept of psychological resilience described in their model.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the present research support the notion that religiosity and moral identity symbolization fosters prosociality among emerging adults. Moreover, religiosity and moral identity symbolization also have an interactive effect on prosocial behavior, thus providing evidence that religiosity along with high moral identity symbolization can enhance prosocial behavior.

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