



RESEARCH PAPER

Modernization and Religious Conception: Role of Technological Advancement, Urbanization, and Cultural Integration in Altering Religious Conception in the Potohar Region, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to find the relationship between the process of modernization and evolving religious conception in Pakistan, focusing on the Potohar region of northern Punjab- consisting of the three districts Rawalpindi, Jhelum, and Chakwal. The objectives elaborated on the impact of technological advances on religious practices in the light of cultural integration. Increasing urbanization is changing the concept of religious practices and modifying them according to social change and modernization. The qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to finalize the results. The data have been gathered through earlier studies, sessions, focused group discussions, and participant observations. The results indicate that the native people's beliefs and rituals are changing due to technological advancement, cultural integration, and urbanization. This paper highlights the effects of modernization in the Potohar region. As a significant outcome of the modernization process - the declining extent of religiosity can be affirmed in the Potohar region. Religious ideas and beliefs have become inferior in people's day-to-day lives due to social transformation.

Introduction

The modernization process is both inevitable and, overall, a good thing (Charlton & Andras, 2003). According to Kornblum (2003), the experience of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization are intricately linked. And this process coincides. Bernstein (2007) explains that modernization is a process associated with society's social, political, and economic elements. It is a fundamental stimulant of technological change, cultural integration, and religious practices in the Potohar region (northern Punjab-Pakistan). As Latif, Shoukat, and Zubaida (2019) discussed, modern technology transformed society from traditional to more advanced. Social change is impressing religious institutions as well. According to

Karamouriz and Fokides (2017), technology significantly impacts all aspects of human activity, including religion. In Krotoski's (2011) views, modern technology virtually influences every part of human life. Technology is reshaping our basic feelings about who we are and how we relate to social aspects.

In this study, we examine how religious beliefs are changing due to the elements of modernization, i.e., technological progress, cultural integration, and urbanization in the Potohar region. In social sciences, religion is understood through a comprehensive approach. For the present research, it is essential to understand that if a sensitive topic such as religion is being discussed openly, it is difficult to find the information without ethnocentric sharing. In the views of Murumba and Odhiamba (2017), technology has contributed to religious worship and practice changes. Paul (2017) presents a new conceptual reality, one that could potentially challenge religion in subtle ways. Technology allows the development of religious activities that go with traditional ones. According to Clivaz (2014), even replace them (e.g., Digital prayer and participation in religious rituals through the Internet) (Baesler & Chen 2013).

Religion is a powerful force that affects an individual and group's public and private life through popular culture and social norms. People cherish beliefs, standards, and values taught by their religions. The world is now becoming more secular, rational, and open to change in a religious context (Granto, Inglehart, & Leblang, 1996). However, different people may have different opinions and role models in this context. Such differences are caused by personal characteristics or perspectives on religion, allowing them to live following their faith. Religion helps people to get an identity within a trust, providing them with standards and a path to follow, while beliefs help them develop and keep a culture. Faith and religion have been studied ever since societies were founded. People have constantly been following norms set by their religion. The concept of beliefs began essentially with the idea of fear and believing in the domination of the mighty supremacy. Every religion has its own opinions and points of view, which give its way of conceiving beliefs.

Literature Review

Although modernization is the effect of societal changes in society, it strongly affects and modifies material and non-material cultures; with time, Karl (1961), in the process of developing the original band of ancient social, economic and inner pledges, are battered and wrecked. People produced obtainable new shapes in socialization and performance in society.

Haviland (2002) said that modernization is one of the most frequently used terms to identify societal and cultural changes as they are occurring today, which impact cultural elements of social orders and changing norms of the societies.

Changes in values and norms in society are also linked with urbanization; Chaudhry (2013) claimed that modernization amplified urbanization in the recent epoch. The rural family is growing increasingly toward centrifugal trends. Its economic homogeneity based on the combined economic activity of its members is declining. The goods of the ordinary family tend to be disrupted because its adult members are increasingly employed in different businesses. Therefore, they are

incapable of occupying together. Family members are distancing themselves from family limitations. They are building their self-reliance initiatives. The inevitable result is weakening family authority, family affiliations and the family itself, and so-called social change in society from one domain to another. This relationship is correlated with each other.

Technology is essential to stretch the trades the advantage of being good, sharper, and earlier than rivalry, but you also must think about customer prospects. In his article entitled "Technology Making It Worse", Atkinson (2003) defines technology as the artificial increase in human ability that should create more robust and intelligent capabilities. Still, our irrational community shows that it now has the reverse effect.

Many modern technologies appear occasionally, but not all are new. These technologies are changes to existing technologies. Modern technologies come out from time to time; they are led to seek new social transformation when they do. The type of technology chosen has a frame for its non-physical culture. This change alters the human thinking process. And it changes their views on how they relate to a distinct set of people (Stromquist, 2005).

Government of Latvia; ESCAP (2018) concluded that new technological advances could enable groups and people to conceive and play together with original invention procedures. The primary roots of the invention make it possible to take part as a basic-root actor, as coordinated actions and systems of academics, demonstrators and consultants investigating procedures to replace processes for creating and introducing knowledge. Successful examples include Indian Aadhaar, programmed for monetary presence and Latvia's Mana Balss. The lives programme helps to take ideas from people in the Assembly and put them on the agenda. As a result, it is understood that technological progress is coordinated with whatever you want.

Technological advances introduce diverse ways of innovating and create problems for people. Immersing new media technologies has become a major shift in people's lives. Modern technologies have become irresistible to them, not just to youth but to everyone. It has become a means to keep abreast, thus contributing to social translation.

The second term of modernization, which is linked with social change in society, is cultural integration. Cultural integration is also a practice of cultural exchange in society. People take over other cultures without compromising their civilization. They can easily switch ideas and minds with another culture without protesting.

Kuran and Sandholm (2008) argued that a prominent characteristic of the culture integration model is that the individual's equilibrium behaviours reflect a trade-off between respect for one's preferences and coordination with the choices of others. Cultural integration leads to cultural change in order. Innovative ideas bring significant incentives for outside change (Kroeber, 1952).

Material and Methods

This research is anthropological and based on qualitative and quantitative methods. The data have been gathered through earlier studies, sessions, focused group discussions, and participant observations. After the interviews with the local community, the data was analyzed through coding to generalized results. The interviews were conducted after the survey in the region of Potohar. The respondents' socio-economic status was considered for the requirement of the study. The total number of respondents was 75 (including males, females, teachers, and students). The respondents were selected from three regions of Potohar. To test the impact of modernization and the rest of the variables. During the research, different seminars, sessions, and daily life of respondents' events were attended for keen observation and to get concrete data and information about the participants. The multiple regression was done with stepwise methods to produce the results in percentage. This technique showed the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The variable characteristics, therefore, are shown in numbers, frequency, and percentages.

Results and Discussion

After 1947, Pakistan never used technology for spiritual training and educational activities. The *Madrassa* and other social institutions were not getting help from any technology to remedy matters. Back in the 1980s, from the religious perspective, technology was regarded as a defective work in the human spirit, and those using it were considered threatening to society. With the turn of the century, the rich westernization and modernization, in the shape of globalization, have brought a new concept of technology into daily life. The guild started to accept the aid of social and business skills to find a resolution to many subjects.

From the religious perspective, modernization is not linear; it is not only working for the betterment of religion but also making pretty little in it. Technological advancement has different steps and phases to bring diversity in religious aspects according to its need and dimension. According to Brown (2018), "modern technology has also empowered religious leaders. Modern technology is radically altering thousands-years old systems of religious leadership". Every faith has a sure and unified system of norms, opinions, and values (material and non-material). Grant, Inglehart, and Leblang (1996) state that a single traditional religion is no longer central to the belief system. Religious beliefs have disappeared because of cults, sects, and secular systems (Robertson, 1981). The primary origin of social change is a contemporary trend, therefore, jointly known as modernization, including technological advancement, urbanization, industrialization, and westernization (Kornblum 2002).

The Potohar region has fertile land where all the comforts of life are available, and people from different areas migrated to live here. Their movement depends on many things, such as travel, business, and political issues. Certain items were based on conversion search and described in the underlying sense. As said by Shklar (1991), empirical evidence also suggests that under the influence of modernity, societies transform socially, economically, and culturally and even changes occur in the level of religiosity. It happens when societies transform and people start getting scientific explanations of social and religious thoughts. According to Tamney (1980), the

transformation of old values and the emergence of new ones with the process of modernization cum secularization brought changes in the thinking and actions of members of society.

Research has found that the purpose of technology is much enhanced in the region and people have an awareness of their role in social and personal life. During the study, in the survey, and during informal and formal interviews, it was found that 80 percent of the participants (16 out of 20) knew about the technology modalities. The respondents' interest in sharing information was strictly observed during the research. They were familiar with the use of technology in the form of mobile phones, smart T.V.s, data processors, and smartphones. They accept the economic consumption of technology in offices and its use at home.

The work of Durkheim (1995) and Weber (1928) highlighted the concept of modernization in society and concluded that modernization created a gap between a person and his religion. People are manipulating the religious aspect according to the feasibility and viability. As Paul (2019) puts forth, different traditional religions can co-exist in a society. According to Durkheim (1995), however, all faiths construct authoritative regimes of truth and moral obligations, organizing the stage for conflict. Berger (1977) says anthropological aspects of pre-industrial society were bonded because of their spiritual beliefs and values. Modernization introduced many novel ways of thinking and more rational thought, losing solidarity, unity, and a bold belief system. Before modernization, religion was based on collective understanding and action, but right away, it was concerned with the individual approach of human organisms. From the theoretical perspective, the model was brought forward with the help of letters to key out the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

According to Berker (2006), the domestication of technology is a more specific approach to media technologies that grow out of the custom of pagan works. The masses are more interested in getting information from spiritualists. The data proves that the people in Potohar know the effects of technical progress, changing their customs and lifestyle. It also determines their religious beliefs and traditions. Technology forces people to apply it everywhere, including religion. According to Wuthnow (2010), the Internet affects the thinking process and connects religious traditions with religious practices. Technological advances pose a few challenges for the people of Potohar. These challenges are based on how people think, behave, and interact with the original rituals and other religious parameters. In Islam, the dominant religious creed followed in the Potohar region, the role of applied science transformed the people of Potohar. When data was collected from natives about the spiritual understanding of Islam, they expressed that technology works positively and negatively in this context. People use technology to understand religious practices, which are more accessible and authentic for their self-interest. Table 1 shows the relationship between modernization—technological advancement, and religion in the Potohar region.

Table 1
Modernization, Technological Advancement, And Religion

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. E	B		
1	(Constant)	.023	.056		
				0.231	.223

Modernization	.205	.022	.211	11.016	.000
Technological adv	.205	.041	.212	17.231	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Religion

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

$$\text{Religion} = .023 + .205 (\text{Modernization}) + .205 (\text{Technological advancement}) + E$$

Modernization has a positive and significant impact on religion. One unit increase in modernization ($\beta = .205$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.205 in faith. One unit increase in technological advancement ($\beta = .205$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.205 in religion. R square ($R^2 = 0.377$) explains that overall, 37.7% change in the dependent variable is due to the independent variable. Technological advancement partially mediates the relationship between Modernization and Religion

According to the analysis, 37.7 percent of respondents consider a change to have occurred due to technological advancement, which is used to prove an understanding of religion and the impact of technology on religion. However, many participants (26.6%) said that technology could not affect religion and that people still have traditional knowledge of religion and practices. The respondents' views proved the division of age and understanding religion and its practices. One of them (age approximately 60 years) claimed:

Urdu: *Hum mazhab kay bary main wohi janty hain jo hum nay apny bazorgo se suna hai. Aj tak wohi karty a rahy hain. Kuch ghalat nahi hota mazhab main.*

English: We know our religion, as our elders told us about. We have been doing the same. Nothing is amiss with this.

Schuurman (2007) claimed that religion has radical and integral importance as it concerns the deepest root of human beings and makes life a coherent whole. This illustrates that religious belief is not one single element to discuss human life; nonetheless a branch of natural processes and reactions of the human heart. Religion gives direction and guidelines to the members of society to live and survive there.

Technological advancement has a real impact on religious practices; as respondents said, change occurs in religious credence through advanced development and change in technology. The data of informal interviews exposed that 26.6 percent of participants use technology to understand religion. However, advances in technology are progressing both positively and negatively.

Moreover, people use technology in different forms, such as print and power media tools, to present information to others. When data is explained electronically or in print, people get information or knowledge without assessing its credibility and authenticity. Sometimes ambiguous information could be problematic for different sects and create a mess in society.

One of the respondents' said he has extensive experience in using technology in the context of religious beliefs. Technology helped him solve many of his believes related issues. People could also help others and use technology productively and effectively.

According to Ellul (1964), through technology, we seek shelter from elements and predation, cure sickness, and find ways to make our lives safer, longer, and more comfortable. Technology is not harmful to people but depends on its use. Technology gives them an appreciation of religion. According to a respondent, technology has become the most straightforward means of understanding religious thoughts and other relevant things. Science gives them the wisdom to understand religion in diverse ways as technology has tied science with religion. One respondent said that science supports all evidence of rituals and that technology is now utilized in various religious practices. Through media, people now similarly understand Islam and technology to teach Quran.

One of the respondents said:

Urdu: *Main nay technology kay zariya bohat sei tadrīs ki hai ab main online Quran parhata hum. Jin ko main Quran parhata hun woh bachay USA se online hoty hain. Ak khas time rakha hota hai jab main unko Quran parhata hun.*

English: I have taught a lot through technology. Now I am teaching Quran online. I teach the Quran to those children who are living in the USA. A time is fixed to teach them Quran.

Based on the data analysis, 60 percent (16 out of 25) of the respondents accepted using technology for spiritual reasons. The thematic analysis shows that 45 percent (12 respondents out of 25) agreed that the use of technology is essential in understanding spiritual beliefs and that technology is also changing as per religious demands and instructions. Technology is no one's enemy, but people must understand what is best for humanity.

Technology reshapes the minds of the new generation and the process of investigating any information through the Internet or television. A certain percentage of the new age believes that any knowledge of religion can be actual or manipulated. After Pakistan became independent, most schools and religious institutions were against using technology but gradually started favouring it. Some spiritual foundations are still against technology usage in the Potohar areas. According to religious scholars, technology can be analogous to anyone and harmful to the new generation. With the same idea, Armfield and Holbert (2003: 76) investigated the relationship between religion, internet usage, and their survey data, based on a nationwide sample of Americans, indicated that "the more religious an individual is, the less likely he or she will use the Internet". Respondents of the present study believe that technology always influences the minds and lives of humans. We have seen that technology changes beliefs and values of faith. The younger generation is spending more time on different internet applications and is using technology, giving less time to religious activities. Usually, they cannot manage the time to recite the Quran and offer prayers.

In Potohar's *madrasas*, only 2 percent (2 out of 25 respondents) of administrators were using technology. They said their learning mode is based on formal methods; they do not employ technological instruments. Therefore, technology can bring a new change in the proportion of life since religion believes in commitment and a sense of duty.

Faith is the road through which humans recover a sincere way to live. Technology is an independent variable and a function of human choices. It is presumptuous for the human mind. In practicality, technology is more beneficial for spreading religious beliefs across the globe. Pakistan is a developing country and has applied technology for development and social improvement in every area of Potohar; assess its positive and negative effects; a comparison from the group discussion is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
A Group Discussion On Learning Patterns

Age	Topic of Discussion	Point of View
20-35	Role of Technology for Religion	This is just for us; we efficiently do our work and task within a moment. We can take knowledge of religion and sort out our events.
36-45	Role of Technology and its effects	It is adept at fetching any information at any time, but it is equally bad as good. We are sometimes not getting knowledge correctly, which creates problems for society.
45 and above	Is technology positive or negative	This is all wrong for a young generation. This creates issues, and the new generation can't understand that it is because of less knowledge in spiritual matters.

Rendering to the group discussion, age groups determine the use of technology in the context of religion. Every age group holds a pearl of different wisdom that brings technology in favour of its functions and the significance of technology in religious matters. A person uses technology in his way. In 1947, knowledge was kept in books, but now it is a personal choice. The Internet and social media expose different things in distinct forms. Only rites and practices change because of awareness and knowledge.

The term Campbell (2005) addresses spiritual training in technology, where religious scholars frame technologies and try to make its aspects according to the religious community's demands. Religious scholars use Pakistan's websites and other link applications to learn and teach spirituality. Not only do they serve the legitimate use of technology for spiritual practices, but they also use the involvement and investigation of technology as a source of information in religion and its practices. The theory of secularization speaks of the relationship between religion and technology. It explains how religious scholars use media to communicate with society.

Interviews revealed that technology overlaps and that people use different apps for different questions. Sometimes such a focus creates problems for the younger generation who does not know what is true in faith. Randolph (2007) points out that the Internet is a highly diverse but overlapping technology. We are, however, unable to explore which technologies are more capable of helping religious

confessions, exploration, and employment. Therefore, religious websites are more attractive for obtaining spiritual knowledge and all these essential daily questions to read and understand.

The collected data for the present study predicts that technology use depends on two types of thoughts and persons. First, antagonistic observers who have hostility towards the purpose of applied science and motivate others to use it to seek and promote it; second, the people who are reluctant participants where cultural forces pressurize and avail opportunities to opt them according to different possibilities. Also, it depends on those enthusiastic about offering official services to use technology for religion. The use of applied scientific discipline is based on the long-standing traditions that look to combine human thought and spiritual beliefs.

Cultural integration and religious belief are unique concepts in social sciences. Cultural integration is about migration and immigration in any area and is built on the notion of adjustment in society. According to the data analysis, the people of Potohar were more focused on the concept of social change adaptation and planning. These social changes affect spiritual practices and rituals. The Potohari people are more open to discussion, particularly in their *firqa*, and people are wise to discuss it in their *firqa*.

One of the respondents said:

Urdu: *Phaly se azadi Zaida hai apny apny firqay ki, hum log Al-Tashi hain. Majlas b karty hain or sunnyao kay sath rahty bi hain. Koi muskil nahi hai her kio ak dosry ka ahtram karta hain.*

English: There is more freedom if you belong to any religious fraternity. We are from Shi' sect. We arrange *majlis* and live with the *Sunnis*. There is no problem as everyone respects each other.

In Potohar, different religious rituals and traditions affect various parts of life. Many people come here from other regions of Pakistan, living together and learning from the culture of hospitality and trust. This cultural integration is involved in the thoughts and minds of the individual. Potohari people change their spiritual traditions according to the social and cultural dimensions. In contextual approaches, religion is a matter of societal influence, and culture gives a platform to follow the rules and regulations of the area.

It was noted during the current research that when the culture is employed to run societies, it may induce psychological issues because every individual uses his/her own opinion about the different decisions, which is problematic for religious practices. Another thing in Potohar is more interest in cultural integration than spiritual practices. People have less time to practice and worship according to a ritual. They are more conscious of cultural practices. In Potohar, the clash between religious practices and cultural norms is caused by cultural change. Many anthropologists have worked around the concept of ethnic integration and cultural influence parameters. The German and British diffusionists also argue that there were multiple forms of cultural centres in ancient times. Cultural traits were diffused instead of isolated elements; however, culture was complex due to the migration of many individuals belonging to other cultures affecting cultural influence on society and

spiritual matters (Winthrop, 1991). Table 3 shows the relationship between modernization, cultural integration, and religion.

Table 3
Modernization, Cultural Integration, And Religion

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	B			
	(Constant)	.213	.436		4.434	.000
1	Modernization	.354	.012	.356	16.016	.000
	Cultural Integr	.151	.021	.155	5.835	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Religion

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

$$\text{Religion} = .213 + .354 (\text{Modernization}) + .151 (\text{Cultural integration}) + E$$

Modernization has a positive and significant impact on religion. One unit increase in modernization ($\beta = .354$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.354 units in religion. One unit increase in cultural integration ($\beta = .151$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.151 units in religion. R square ($R^2 = 0.657$) explains the overall 15.1% change in the dependent variable due to the independent variable. Cultural integration partially mediates the relationship between Modernization and Religion.

In Pakistan, urbanization increases daily as farmlands are transformed into urban guilds. Masses are more interested in living in urban societies than in rural areas with power and resources. In all the four regions of Potohar, people were more inclined towards living in urban areas than rural ones as the former allows them to organize companies for more good support. People market their land to buyers and build palaces and clubs.

As per the interview analysis of the present study, the people of Potohar can be divided into two classes: one that plans for better societies with all facilities of life and the second that believes societies eliminate social life and people are more conscious about elite facilities. Urbanization has created societal issues. And people are leaving religious practices to follow a more materialistic approach to life instead of remembering Allah. They want shortcuts to making more money and having more facilities. They even have no time to visit the holy places to worship Allah, and the number of *masjids* is increasing daily. Almost every street has one *masjid*. However, the strength of the population offering prayer is less.

One respondent has shown that:

Urdu: *Log nay dunyia dari chor di hai, bal-kay deen ko b chor diya hai. Log bus bhag rahy hain dolat kay laye or zaindagi ki asaishon kay laye.*

English: people have left social as well as religious rudiments. They are in pursuit of wealth and luxuries of life.

Urbanization affects people's minds and looks at the things and religious practices fulfilling their desire. Interviewees said people interfere in their social life

and work. They have been used in various corporeal processes of society and are unaware of the spiritual exercises. This matter has also become part of socialization with the next generation doing the same and thinking analogously. Table 4 shows the relationship between modernization, urbanization, and religion in the Potohar region.

Table 4
Modernization Urbanization and Religion

		Coefficients				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	B		
1	(Constant)	.432	.036		7.433	.000
	Modernization	.151	.112	.156	6.026	.000
	Urbanization	.331	.026	.332	7.835	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Religion

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

$$\text{Religion} = .432 + .151 (\text{Modernization}) + .331 (\text{Urbanization}) + E$$

Modernization has a positive and significant impact on religion. One unit increase in modernization ($\beta = .151$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.151 units in religion. One unit increase in urbanization ($\beta = .331$, $\rho \leq 0.05$, $t \geq 2$) increases 0.331 units in religion. R square ($R^2 = 0.375$) explains that overall, 37.5% change in the dependent variable is due to the independent variable. Urbanization partially mediates the relation between modernization and religion.

Conclusion

Conclusively, we can say that the religious faith and beliefs are deeply associated with modernization and social transformation in the Potohar region. The impact of modernization is changing the religious practices and rituals of the people. Religious ideas and beliefs have become inferior in people's day-to-day lives due to social transformation. The decline in observational religiosity can be observed clearly as an outcome of modernization, technological advancement, urbanization, and acculturation of the Potohar region.

Our traditional values are losing effectiveness due to the worldwide spread of electronic and print media. Due to these cultural changes, the youth is confronting many difficulties related to the shift in the value system. A small percentage of well-educated masses in traditional communities understand the importance of values. It requires participation in the local culture and bearing on traditional values, particularly folk and religious values, while, at the same time, taking on the universal cultural code and taking part in global culture.

Recommendations

Technological progress is based on adaptation, the fastest process to cause changes. The government should set up policies to stop technologies that are not beneficial for society. A plan should be prepared to keep save next generation from adapting robotic thoughts and activities.

Cultural integration results in the loss of other cultures. People should therefore be aware of the best culture for them. The communication gap between the younger and older generations should be exterminated.

The government should pass bills on urbanization since it is increasing daily, and the masses exchange their body tactfully, eliminating rural and farm lands and leading to people migrating to urban regions.

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