Selective Religiosity among Young Girls in Mashhad: 
A Grounded Theory

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
The twenty first century is assumed to be the era of attention to social transformation conditions and factors due to the third world developments, mass media development and technological developments from the viewpoints of social issues analysts (Roche, 1996). Social changes in Iran recent community is so quick that even little attention in the most important cultural elements in a short period of time is clear. According to Roche (1996) strong social changes indicate a cut between today cultural relationships and the past. Change in cultural elements such as norms, values and tastes indicate how Iranian youths have been changed during the recent generations. Studying these youths’ new life features is important as it can present a realistic image of the status quo. As youths play a very important role in establishing society culture, studying their life style is of prime importance.

Religiosity is one of the basic components for life style construct; especially in Iranian culture which is assumed to be one of the essential parts of social life. In Iranian culture, beliefs and rituals play an important role and this indicates its origins in life style. According to interpretive approach in the present research, the present research tries to study actors’ mentality toward religiosity among young girls living in Mashhad. The present research tries to find out the image of religiosity in actors’ mentality so that conditions or infrastructures, interactions and processes as well as consequences of this kind of religiosity can be studied. The present research main goal is reproducing the youth mental meaning of religiosity.

2. Concepts
Religiosity means enjoying “religious commitment” such that individuals’ attitude and actions are effected. The type of effect is determined by the religion (Shojaee Zand, 2005, cited in Himmelfarb, 1975). Religious refers to anyone or any phenomena in which religion values and signs are manifested. Religion values and signs manifestation can be recognized in his/her overt and covert actions and attitudes. Therefore, he/she can be distinguished from others through

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"commitment” and “religious obligation” as well as religiosity “consequence” and its effects on his/her thought, mind and social and individual action (Mahdavi Kani, 2008).

Life style consists of individuals’ performance, style of behavior and pattern in social life mainstream and in a coherent social structure by which one is distinguished from others. Life style enjoys different aspects such as family system, religion, and media.

Individuals’ life style is effected by his/her semantic system and religion is one of these semantic systems. All religions enjoy semantic systems, teachings, entities as well as structures which enable their followers in establishing life styles based on them. Religion can play a role in creating manner, taste and aesthetic and as a result in life style. It also involves forming other life styles apart from religion life styles (Mahdavi Kani, 2008).

Some thinkers believe that life style is dependent on values that originates from culture or religion. Values and norms that Islam bestows human beings effect his/her taste, manner and his/her interpretations of life. Finally, it depicts and propagates a style which results in forming religious life style and behavior (Mahdavi Kani, 2008).

3. Methodology
As the present research is focused on studying actors’ mentality of religiosity among young girls in Mashhad, therefore, interpretive and qualitative method has been selected as the dominant methodology and the grounded theory has been applied for carrying out the research process. Qualitative method and grounded theory have been applied in the present research due to the sensitivity of the issue and the religiosity wide and deep aspects in life style. So, the present research tries to study and reproduce youth understanding and interpretation of religiosity through interpretative approach and by entering into the studied society semantic system.

4. Findings
After extracting and encoding the information related to actors’ mentality regarding religiosity, 18 concepts were extracted during open coding which were classified in forms of 4 main categories during axial coding. These categories include tolerance, individual taste centrality, more effectiveness of religion, anti-traditionalism and dual identity. During selective coding stage, these categories resulted in extracting one central category which comprises the above mentioned categories. The central category in the present research is “selective religiosity”.

5. Discussion and Conclusion
According to the data collected by interview with individuals, five axial categories were found including tolerance, individual taste centrality, the dichotomy of value, religion effectiveness and anti-traditionalism among which the central category as “selective religiosity” was found out. Selective religiosity means that individuals obey a part of the religion they agree with and they put aside those parts which prevent them from achieving their goals.

Changes incurred in individuals’ religiosity especially young people such as selective religiosity enjoy a series of conditions and grounds which are resulted by certain processes. Western culture components (modernity) such as individuals’ taste, different life styles and anti-traditionalism, etc. result in changes in individuals’ life style and
their attitudes. As life style and religiosity style are two interrelated categories, any changes in one of them brings about change in the other. As a result, selective religiosity is the result of this process.

The other point to refer is that those who follow a selective religiosity are still inclined toward being religious and they avoid words such as “impious” or “Non-Muslim” and call themselves “Muslim”; it means that in Iran society, avoiding from Islamic rules still is not a value but people relate their own personal interpretations to a part of religion (paying attention to religion material effectiveness aspect).

Today's young people require redefinition of identity especially their own religion identity. He/she is trapped among plurality of western values and a mass of traditional values which he/she acquires through sociability and are transferred to him/her by parents. As a result, he/she suffers from a kind of identity crisis or value crisis and the consequences will be seen during life difficult choices. Among its consequences one can refer to destruction of unifying role of religion among individuals, individuals’ attention toward religion effectiveness aspect instead of nature of religion and religiosity.

**Keywords:** Religiosity, Youths, Life style, Selective religiosity, Grounded theory.

**References (In Persian)**


References (In English)


