

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HELPING BEHAVIORS, RELIGIOSITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION. A CASE STUDY ON TURKISH MUSLIMS*

Ali AYTEN¹

ABSTRACT

Last two decades, various studies have been carried out to examine virtues and their relations to religiosity and positive health appearances such as happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction. The emerging of positive psychology has cultivated the spreading of studies on the relationship between variables mentioned above. This paper investigates the relationship between helping behaviors, religiosity and life satisfaction on the case of Turkish Muslim sample. A total 230 participants were recruited from different districts of Istanbul (Turkey) using non-random snowball sampling techniques in December 2016. Among the participants sampled, 47% (N=108) are men and 53% (N=122) women. Ages of participants range between 15 and 70 and mean age is 28.5 (SD=10.8). In the current study, "Brief Islamic Religiosity Scale" and "Empathic Inclination Measure", "Helping Behaviors Scale" and "Scale for Satisfaction with Life" are applied to the sample. According to regression findings, religiosity has a positive effect on 'helping behaviors' and 'life satisfaction'. Findings also indicated that empathy and religiosity are mediating factor on the relationship between helping and life satisfaction. Implications of these results and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Helping behaviors, prosocial behavior, altruism, religiosity, empathy, life satisfaction

Özet

Yardım Etme Davranışları, Dindarlık ve Hayat Memnuniyeti Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma

Son çeyrek yüzyılda, erdemlerin dindarlık ve mutluluk, iyi oluş, hayat memnuniyeti gibi pozitif sağlık göstergeleriyle ilişkisine dair pek çok araştırma yapılmıştır. Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımının ortaya çıkışı, söz konusu bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi ele alan araştırmaların sayısını artırmıştır. Bu makale, yardım etme davranışları, dindarlık ve hayat memnuniyetini ilişkisini, İstanbul'dan toplanan 230 kişilik bir çalışma grubundan elde edilen veriler çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Çalışma grubu kartopu örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiş ve veriler Aralık 2016 yılında toplanmıştır. Katılımcıların %47'si erkek %53'ü kadınlardan oluş-

* The preliminary findings of this study has been presented as oral presentation in IAPR Congress hold in Hamar, Norway (21-24 August 2017).

1 PhD, Department of Psychology of Religion, The Faculty of Theology, Marmara University and Near East University. aliyten@marmara.edu.tr.

maktadır. Katılımcıların yaşları 15-70 arasında değişmektedir. Yaş ortalaması $M=28.5$ ($SD=10.8$)'dir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak, *Dindarlık Ölçeği*, *Empatik Eğilim Ölçeği*, *Hayat Memnuniyeti Ölçeği* ve *Yardım Etme Davranışları Ölçeği* kullanılmıştır. Regresyon analizine göre, dindarlığın hem yardım etme hem de hayat memnuniyeti üzerinde olumlu etkisi vardır. Yine bulgulara göre empati ve dindarlık, yardım etme ve hayat memnuniyeti ilişkisinde arabulucu faktörler olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yardım Etme Davranışları, Prososyal Davranış, Özgecilik, Dindarlık, Empati, Hayat Memnuniyeti.

INTRODUCTION

The helping behavior has been analyzed by philosophers and theologians for hundreds of years. If we look at the psychology literature on helping behavior, we come across three main historical periods. **Firstly**, helping others was examined as part of prosocial concern towards others, especially in social psychology. Helping behavior was studied by psychologists as one of the prosocial behaviors such as fairness, forgiveness, sharing, solidarity etc. In this period “The Kitty Case” was a turning point for studies on helping behaviors. After that case social scientist escalated the number of studies on helping behaviors. Mainly they focused on the question, “Why are people not helping others?”² **In the second period** helping was studied as a value. Many researchers examined it as a value that was part of benevolence by using Rokeach and Shewart’s models on values.³ **In the third period** helping was examined as a virtue. Especially during the last two decades, various studies have been carried out to examine helping as a virtue and its relations to positive health appearances such as happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction. The emerging of positive psychology has cultivated the spreading of studies on the relationship between variables mentioned above.⁴

- 2 L. Berkowitz & K. G. Lutterman, “The Traditional Socially Responsible Personality”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32, 1968, pp. 169-185; J. M. Darley & B. Latané, “Bystander Intervention in Emergencies: Diffusion of Responsibility”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4), 1968, pp. 377-383; J. M., Darley & C. D. Batson, “From Jerusalem to Jericho: A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27, 1973, pp. 100-108.
- 3 M. Rokeach, *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal*, New York: The Free Press, 1979; S. H. Schwartz, *Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries*, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Ed. M. Zanna), c. 25, London: Academic Press, 1992.
- 4 N. Aghababaei, S. Mohammadtabar & M. Saffarinia, “Dirty Dozen vs. the H factor: Comparison of the Dark Triad and Honesty-Humility in prosociality, religiosity, and happiness”, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 67, 2014, pp. 6-10; L. Becchetti, L. Corrado & P. Conzo, “Sociability, altruism and well-being”, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 41, 2017, pp. 441-486.

Psychologists of religion have examined the subject of helping in the context of its relation to religiosity. Over the past two decades, considerable empirical research has been accrued concerning the relationship between helping and religiosity, religious involvement, religious commitment, religious orientation etc. Some of these studies focused on the question, "Are religious people more likely to help others?" Some researchers argued that religious people are more benevolent than non-religious counterparts. For example, Ellison⁵ argued that religious people are more helpful to others than non-religious people due to three reasons; firstly, prayers and worship provide religious people with good relations to the sacred. This might help them develop good relations with others; secondly, if religious people read about good examples (Good Samaritans, The Brotherhood of Ansar and Muhajir) from holy scriptures, they might perform such acts in their own life; thirdly some religious teachings of various religions teach how to achieve divine consent through gaining peoples' consent.⁶

In the earlier studies concerning the relationship between religiosity and helping behaviors, it was relatively easy to answer in the positive the question "Are religious people more likely to help others?" There were many studies showing that religious people reported that they themselves were benevolent people and also that they were perceived as benevolent people by others. These findings were mainly found by self-report studies or studies using only attitudes scales.⁷ However, during the last decades some other studies have found that there is no relationship between religiosity and helping others⁸ and some other studies show that there is negative correlation between helping and being religious.⁹ Still, several other studies showed that the relationship between religiosity and helping might change depending on the kind of religiosity or religious orientation. For example, some studies demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between helping and intrinsic religiosity and negative relationship with extrinsic religiosity.¹⁰ For example, Reitsma, Scheepers & Groten-

5 C. G. Ellison, "Are Religious People Nice People? Evidence from the National Survey of Black Americans", *Social Forces*, 71 (2), 1992, pp. 411-430.

6 A. Ayten, *Empati ve Din (Empathy and Religion)*, Istanbul: Iz Yayincilik, 2010, pp. 94-98.

7 Ayten, *Empati ve Din*, pp. 20-25.

8 C. D. Batson, P. Schoenrade & P. Virginia, "Brotherly Love or Self-Concern? Behavioural consequences of religion", In L. D. Brown (Ed.), *Advances in the Psychology of Religion*, (pp. 185-208), New York: Pergamon Press, 1985.

9 J. Decety, J. M. Cowell, K. Lee, R. Mahasneh, S. Malcolm-Smith, B. Selçuk & X. Zhou "The Negative Association between Religiousness and Children's Altruism across the World", *Current Biology*, 25, 2015, pp. 1-5.

10 R. W. Hood et al. *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1996; D. M. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, 2. Basim, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

huis¹¹, found that the consequence dimension of religiosity has positive role on helping others. All these finding were discussed in terms of the kind of religiosity and the quality of religious education, and the level of conveying religious values to virtues area and the kind of helping behaviors. For example, Saroglou¹² mentioned that religiosity might have a positive role on helping near targets (for e.g., relatives, neighbors) but not far-out targets (for e.g., strangers, non-believers, members of other religions). Some other psychologists discussed the notion that religiosity might draw cultural lines when religious people want to help others. For example, Ayten¹³ found in his study that 56% of the population mentioned that they are discriminative against non-believers when they are in the position to help them. Rózycka-Tran¹⁴ has found that “*‘love thy neighbor’ golden rule applies only to the religious in-group*”.

Aims and Questions of the Study

The major aim of my study was to illustrate helping behavior inclination of the Turkish-Muslims. Additionally, I aimed **(1)**, to discover the relationship between gender and dependent variables (religiosity, helping behavior, empathy, life satisfaction). **(2)**, to examine the correlations of helping, religiosity, empathy and life. **(4)**, to investigate mediating role of empathy and religiosity in the relationship between helping and life satisfaction.

Based upon these questions and the findings of other studies we constructed these following hypotheses (H₁₋₄):

H_{1a}: Females will score higher than male in helping.

H_{1b}: Females will score higher than male in religiosity.

H_{1c}: Females will score higher than male in empathy.

H_{1d}: Females will score higher than male in life satisfaction.

H_{1e}: Females will score higher than males in ‘helping friend’ and males will score higher than females in ‘helping in ambiguous situations’

H_{2a}: There is a positive relationship between religiosity and helping

- 11 J. Reitsma, J., P. Scheepers & M. Grotenhuis “Dimensions of Individual Religiosity and Charity: Cross-National Effect Differences in European Countries?”, *Review of Religious Research*, 47 (4), 2006, pp. 347-362.
- 12 V. Saroglou, “Religion’s Role in Prosocial Behavior: Myth and reality?”, *Psychology of Religion Newsletter*, 31 (2), 2006, pp. 1-8.
- 13 Ayten, *Empati ve Din*, p. 110.
- 14 J. Rózycka-Tran, “Lovethyneighbor? Theeffects of religious in/out-groupidentity on socialbehavior”, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 115, 2017, pp. 7–12.

H_{2b}: There is a positive relationship between religiosity and empathy

H_{2c}: There is a positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction

H_{3a}: The effect of religiosity will be higher than empathy and helping on life satisfaction.

H_{4a}: Religiosity and empathy will be the mediating factor in the relationship between helping and life satisfaction.

METHOD

Survey method and questionnaire technique were used in this research. "Brief Islamic Religiosity Measure" and "Empathic Inclination Measure", "Helping Behaviors Measure" and "Scale for Satisfaction with Life" were carried out on the subjects. The data were analyzed by SPSS statistical program. Analyses of factor, reliability, *t*-test, Pearson correlation and multiple regressions were used for data analysis.

Participants

The sample consists of 230 participants recruited from different districts of Istanbul (Turkey), through non-random snowball sampling techniques. Participants reported their gender as the following; 53% (*N*= 122) are females and 47% (*N*= 108) are males. The mean age of the study participants was 28.5 (*SD*=10.89) years and participants ranged in age from 17 to 70 years. 34.3% (*N*=79) of the sample are married, and 62.6% (*N*=144) are single, and 3 % (*N*=7) are other (engaged, separated or widowed etc.).

Measures

Background Information

Participants responded to several questions regarding the demographic information (gender, age, marital status etc.).

Helping Behaviors Measure

In the present study, *Helping Orientation Questionnaire*¹⁵ was used to assess the Turkish Muslim People's attitudes toward helping behaviors. The measurement was adopted to the Turkish language by Ayten¹⁶. It included seven different types of helping behaviors: (1) basic economic helping, (2) helping friends, (3) solidarity, (4) helping neighbors, (5) helping

15 D. Romer, C. L. Gruder & T. Lizzadro, T., "A Person Situation Approach to Altruistic Behaviour", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (5), 1986, pp.1001-1012.

16 A. Ayten, *Prososyal Davranışlarda Dindarlık ve Empatinin Rolü [The Role of Religiosity and Empath on Prosocial Behaviours]*. Doctorate Thesis. Istanbul: Marmara University, 2009.

charity organizations, (6) helping in ambiguous situations and (7) basic help to strangers. Each item contains four options pointing out motivations/intentions of helping behaviors, and the scores of items change according to the content: Altruistic and unconditional helping (4 point e.g., *I help him/her without any expectation and recompense*), reciprocal/conditional helping (3 point, e.g., *I will help my neighbor if s/he is kind or I help someone hoping s/he will help me in the future*), avoiding helping (2 point. e.g., *I try to find an excuse not to help*) and the whole sale rejection of any helping behavior (1 point. e.g., *I refuse to help*). Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin parameter and Bartlett test showed the suitability of data for factor analysis [$KMO=.72$; $\chi^2=348.87$; $p=.000$]. The internal reliability of the measure was acceptable ($\alpha=0.55$).

Empathic Inclination Measure

Participant's empathic inclination was measured by *Interpersonal Reactivity Index*¹⁷. The measurement was adopted to Turkish by Ayten¹⁸. 9 items were constructed as a Likert-type scale format ranging from 4 (*always*) to 1 (*never*). After principal components factor analysis, it was decided that the measure was reduced to only one factor, and seemed acceptable to using in this study [$KMO=.86$; $\chi^2=1587.76$; $p=.000$]. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was also compatible ($\alpha=0.77$).

Brief Islamic Religiosity Measure

In this study respondents' religiosity was measured with *Brief Islamic Religiosity Measure*¹⁹. It includes 10 items and two dimensions ('*religious faith and consequence*' and '*religious ritual and knowledge*'). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin parameter and Bartlett test showed the suitability of data for factor analysis. [$KMO= .83$, $\chi^2=2325.27$; $p=.000$]. Cronbach's alphas in that study were compatible: .743 and .742 for two sub-dimensions, respectively.

*Life Satisfaction: The Satisfaction with Life Scale*²⁰ was used to measure the level of life satisfaction for participants. Scale was adopted to Turkish by Ayten²¹. He found that Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin parameter and

17 M. Davis, *Interpersonal Reactivity Index, Empathy: A Social Psychological Approach*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996.

18 Ayten, a.g.tez., p. 98.

19 Ayten, a.g.tez., p. 100.

20 E. Diener, R. A. Emmons, R. J. Larsen & S. Griffin, "The Satisfaction with Life Scale", *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 1985, pp. 71-75.

21 A. Ayten, *Tanrıya Sığınmak (To Take shelter in God)*, Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2012, pp. 32-33.

Bartlett test were enough to show suitability of data for factor analysis [$KMO = .81$; $\chi^2 = 323,367$; $p = 000$]. Cronbach's alphas in that study was acceptable ($\alpha = 0.810$).

Procedure

The data of the present study were collected between December 2016 from the Sunni Muslims from different districts of Istanbul in Turkey. Questionnaires containing *Brief Islamic Religiosity Measure*, *Empathic Inclination Measure*, *Helping Behaviors Measure*, and *The Satisfaction with Life Scale* were distributed to participants in schools (students, teachers and academics etc.) The study was carried out with the help of approximately 5 pollsters. Pollsters informed the participants about the objectives of the study and what their participation would entail. They also answered participants' questions regarding the study and the questionnaire if needed. Completion of the questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes based on voluntary participation. Participants did not hesitate or object to answering the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Relationship between gender, religiosity, helping, empathy and life satisfaction

An Independent Sample *t*-test was conducted in order to test hypotheses H_{1a-d} and examine group differences between females and males with regards to the level of helping, religiosity, empathy and life satisfaction. Table 1 presents the ranges, means, and the standard deviations of the main variables of the present study.

Table 1. Range, mean, and standard deviations for the main variables of the study

	Females (N=159)			Males (N=183)		
	Range	M	SD	Range	M	SD
1.Age	17-70	29.05	11.50	17-63	28.00	10.15
2. Helping	1-4	3.61*	0.294	1-4	3.51*	0.451
3.Religiosity	1-5	4.10	0.561	1-5	4.03	0.609
4. Empathy	1-5	4.14**	0.463	1-5	3.84**	0.650
5. Life satisfaction	1-7	4.53*	1.41	1-7	4.15*	1.25

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$

Table 1 shows that females ($M = 3.61$) scored higher in helping behaviors as opposed to the males ($M = 3.50$). And the difference between the

two groups for helping reached the level of statistical significance ($t_{(230)}=-2.102$; $p=0.037$). This result indicated that there were gender differences in helping behavior, moreover, it supported the H_{1a} research hypothesis that *females will score higher than male in helping*.

As can be seen in Table 1, females ($M=4.10$) scored higher in religiosity than males ($M=4.03$) did. However, the difference between the two groups for religiosity did not reach the level of statistical significance ($p>.05$). This finding did not support H_{1b} , research hypothesis that *females will score higher than males in religiosity*.

Table 1 displays that females ($M=4.14$) scored higher in empathy than males ($M=3.84$) did. The difference the two groups for empathy reached the level of statistical significance ($t_{(230)}=-3.899$; $p=0.000$). The findings supported H_{1c} , research hypothesis that *females will score higher than males in empathy*.

According to the scores of life satisfaction, there was difference between males ($M=4.15$) and females ($M=4.53$). The difference between the two groups for life satisfaction reached the level of statistical significance ($t_{(230)}=-2.144$; $p=0.033$). Thus, the hypothesis that *females will score higher than males in life satisfaction* was supported by the findings.

Gender and the type of helping behaviors

In the present study *Helping Orientation Questionnaire* included seven different types of helping behaviors. To answer that question ‘who will have higher score in the seven kinds of helping behavior: Females or Males?’ an Independent Sample t -test was used in current study. Figure 1 shows the means of the types of helping behaviors for males and females.

Figure 1. Means of the types of helping behaviors for males and females.

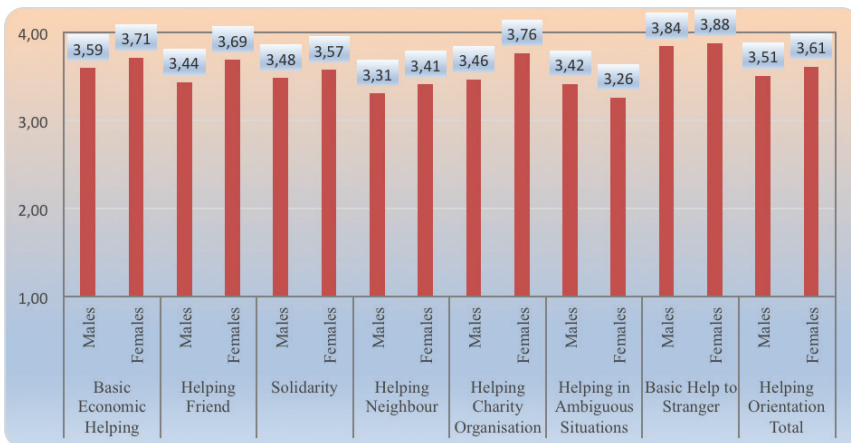


Figure 1 shows that females scored higher in six types of helping behavior (basic economic helping [$M_{females} = 3.71$; $SD_{females} = .648$; $M_{males} = 3.59$; $SD_{males} = .785$], helping friend [$M_{females} = 3.69$; $SD_{females} = .669$; $M_{males} = 3.44$; $SD_{males} = .969$], solidarity [$M_{females} = 3.57$; $SD_{females} = .714$; $M_{males} = 3.48$; $SD_{males} = .767$], helping neighbor [$M_{females} = 3.41$; $SD_{females} = .556$; $M_{males} = 3.31$; $SD_{males} = .676$], helping charity organization [$M_{females} = 3.76$; $SD_{females} = .727$; $M_{males} = 3.46$; $SD_{males} = 1.04$] and basic help to stranger [$M_{females} = 3.88$; $SD_{females} = .376$; $M_{males} = 3.84$; $SD_{males} = .413$]) than males did. Males scored higher in only one type of helping behavior (helping in ambiguous situations [$M_{females} = 3.26$; $SD_{females} = .968$; $M_{males} = 3.42$; $SD_{males} = .977$]) than females did. The difference the two groups for helping behaviors reached the level of statistical significance in ‘helping friend’ ($t_{(230)} = -2.278$; $p = 0.024$) and ‘helping charity organization’ ($t_{(230)} = -2.490$; $p = 0.014$). These findings supported H_{1c} that *females will score higher than males in ‘helping friend’ and males will score higher than females in ‘helping in ambiguous situations’*

The Effect of Religiosity on Helping, Empathy and Life Satisfaction

A series of simple linear regression analyses (enter method) were used to assess whether religiosity has an effect on helping, empathy, and life satisfaction (see Table 2.). Thus, religiosity is used as an independent variable-IV; helping behaviors, empathy and life satisfaction used as dependent variables-DV. It should be noted that the DVs are the predicted variables and the IV is the variable entered into the equation as the predictor.

Table 2. Regression analyses for religiosity on helping, empathy and life satisfaction

IV: Religiosity			
DV: Helping Behavior	$\Delta R^2 = .199$	$F = 57.154$	$p = .000$
	$\beta = .450$	$t = 7.560$	$p = .000$
DV: Empathy	$\Delta R^2 = .171$	$F = 47.624$	$p = .000$
	$\beta = .418$	$t = 6.901$	$p = .000$
DV: Life Satisfaction	$\Delta R^2 = .097$	$F = 25.174$	$p = .000$
	$\beta = .318$	$t = 5.017$	$p = .000$

According to regression analyses, religiosity was a significant predictor on the helping behavior, empathy, and life satisfaction. As can be seen in Table-2, religiosity accounted for 19% of the variance in the helping behaviors, 17% of the variance in the empathy, and 9% of the variance in the life satisfaction. As regards Beta coefficients, positive correlations were found between religiosity and helping ($\beta = .450$; $t = 7.560$; $p = .000$), religiosity and

empathy ($\beta=.418$; $t=6.901$; $p=.000$), and religiosity and life satisfaction ($\beta=.318$; $t=5.017$; $p=.000$). The results indicate that “helping behavior”, “empathy” and “life satisfaction” increase as “religiosity” increases. The findings support the H_{2abc} research hypotheses that *there are positive relationships between religiosity, helping, empathy and life satisfaction*.

The Effects of religiosity, empathy and helping on life satisfaction

Multiple regression analysis (stepwise method) is performed to assess the effects of religiosity, empathy and helping on life satisfaction. In Step 1, the factor ‘religiosity’ is entered alone. In step 2, the two predictors of religiosity and empathy are entered simultaneously. The dependent variable is life satisfaction. Helping is the excluded variable. The multiple regression analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Stepwise regression of scales for life satisfaction as dependent variable

	Step 1 β (p) β (p)	Step 2
Religiosity	.318(.000)	.240 (.000)
Religiosity & Empathy		.188 (.000)
ΔR^2	.097	.123

Table 3 shows us that religiosity and empathy were significant predictors on the life satisfaction. In step 1, ‘religiosity’ alone accounts for 9% of the variance in life satisfaction ($\Delta R^2=.097$; $F=25.174$; $p=.000$). However, in the Step 2, ‘religiosity’ and ‘empathy’ together account for 12% of the variance in life satisfaction ($\Delta R^2=.123$; $F=16.713$; $p=.000$). As regards Beta coefficients, positive correlation was found between religiosity and life satisfaction and empathy and life satisfaction. (see Step 2: $\beta=.240$; $t=3.501$; $p=.000$ for ‘religiosity’; $\beta=.188$; $t=2.742$; $p=.000$ for ‘empathy’). The results indicate that “life satisfaction” increases as “religiosity” and “empathy” increase. The findings support the H_{3a} : *that the effect of religiosity will be higher than empathy and helping on life satisfaction*.

Depending of these finding, hierarchical regression analysis was done to show mediating roles of religiosity and empathy in the relationship between helping and life satisfaction. Baron & Kenny’s²² model was used to show the mediating roles of empathy and religiosity on the relationship between helping and life satisfaction. According to Beta coefficients, posi-

22 R. M. Baron & A. D. Kenny, “The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6),1986, pp. 1173-1182.

tive correlation was found between helping and life satisfaction in Step 1 ($\beta=.261$; $t=4.053$; $p=.000$). In step 2, after entering empathy and religiosity as independent variables to the model. Helping was not a significant predictor on life satisfaction (Step 2; $\beta=.096$; $t=1.307$; $p=.192$ for 'helping'; $\beta=.157$; $t=2.174$; $p=.031$ for 'empathy'; $\beta=.209$; $t=2.893$; $p=.004$ for 'religiosity'). The findings showed that religiosity and empathy were mediating factors in the relationship between helping and life satisfaction (see Table 4). This finding also supported H_{4a} that *religiosity and empathy will be the mediating factor in the relationship between helping and life satisfaction.*

Table 4. Hierarchical regression of scales for life satisfaction as dependent variable

	Step 1 β (p) β (p)	Step 2
Helping	.261(.000)	.096 (.192)
Helping & Empathy & Religiosity		.157 (.031)
		.209 (.004)
ΔR^2	.064	.125

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Since the end of 1960s many social scientists have focussed on examining prosocial behaviour, especially helping behaviour. At the beginning, they examined the roles of bystander effect, altruism, race, ability, situational and dispositional variables, gender, social status, the situations of help seekers, personality, empathy etc.²³ After 1970 some researchers have studied the role of religion/ religiosity on prosocial behaviours.²⁴ Especially after the 1990s the number of studies on relationship between religiosity and helping has increased and scholar have asked the question "Are religious people nice/r people?" in their studies.²⁵ During the last

23 A. M. McGuire, "Helping Behaviors in the Natural Environment: Dimensions and Correlates of Helping", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 1995, pp. 45-56; F. Iqbal, "Prosocial Behavior in Different Situations among Men and Women", *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8 (6), 2013, pp. 31-40.

24 C. D. Batson, "Religion as Prosocial: Agent or Double Agent?", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 15 (1), 1976, pp. 19-45.

25 V. Saroglou et al. "Prosocial Behavior and Religion: New Evidence Based on Projective Measures and Peer Ratings", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44 (3), 2005, pp. 39-50; A. Ayten, A., "Are Religious people benevolent people? A Study on the case of Turkish Muslims", *Journal of Intercultural and Religious Studies*, (4), 2013, pp. 63-76; O. A. Afolabi, "Psychosocial Predictors of Prosocial Behaviour among A Sample of Nigerian Undergraduates", *European Scientific Journal*, 10(2), 2014, pp. 241-266; D. Arli & H. Lasmono, "Are religious people more caring? Exploring the impact of religiosity on charitable organizations in a developing country", *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 20, 2015, pp. 38-51.

two decades, especially after the emerging of positive psychology, various studies have been carried out to examine prosocial behaviors and their relations to health indicators such as happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction, depression, anxiety etc.²⁶ However, the studies have mostly been carried out on the Judeo-Christian samples. The aim of this current paper was to contribute and fill the gap that exists in the literature regarding the religiosity, helping and life satisfaction in relation to traditions outside the Judeo-Christian culture. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the relationship between gender and main study variables (helping, empathy, religiosity, and life satisfaction). In this way, the present study intends to offer new data to the existing research and aims to contribute to the cross-cultural debates in terms of religiosity and pro-social behavior links.

With regards to the first research hypothesis (H1_{a-d}), the findings indicate that there is a positive but not statistically significant relationship between gender and religiosity. This finding is not consistent with the data from other studies that were conducted using different samples which show that females are shown to score higher than males in religiosity.²⁷

As for the role of gender in helping and empathy the findings of study indicated that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between gender and helping, and gender and empathy. It means that females scored higher than their male counterparts in empathy and helping. If we look at research focusing on the role of gender on helping, altruism and empathy we observe that several questions were answered by scholars, such as: Are females or males more likely to help others? Are females or males more likely to seek help from others? Are females or males more likely to be helped by others? In the current study the first question was examined. Some other studies examining the later questions have found that males are more likely to help females and some other studies indicated that both males and females are more enthusiastic to help females.²⁸ Our study findings were consistent with the data from other studies indicating that females scored higher in helping and empathy than males

26 N. Krause & D. Hayward, "Religious involvement, helping others, and psychological well-being", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 17(6), 2014, pp. 629-640.

27 J. Hintikka, T. Koskela, O. Kontula, K. Koskela, H. Koivumaa-Honkanen & H. Viinamaki, "Religious Attendance and Life Satisfaction in the Finnish General Population", *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 29(2), 2001, pp.158-164; Ayten, *Empati ve Din*, p. 138.

28 S Salminen & T. Glad, "The Role of Gender in Helping Behavior", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 132 (1),2001, pp. 131-133.

did. For example, Morris²⁹, Khan, Watson, & Habib³⁰, and Ayten³¹ have found that females scored higher than males in empathy. Many studies indicated that females are more likely to help other than males. Especially in helping friends, relatives and neighbors, many studies indicated that females are more likely to help than males. For instance, Eagly & Crowley analyzing 172 studies focusing on the role of gender in helping found that females are more willing to help their friends and relatives than males.³² Einolf³³ has found that females are more successful in helping behavior including personal volunteerism than males but males are more successful in the economic helping towards charity organizations than females. But some scholars argued that even though females have more empathy and more helping inclination to others, because of their less self-esteem and physical power they might be reluctant to help others in some situations.³⁴ For example, Ayten (2010) found that females scored higher in 'helping friend' than males did but males scored higher in 'helping in ambiguous situations' than females. Iqbal (2013) found that females were more likely to help indirectly especially in ambiguous situations and situations which they feel themselves weak physically. In the present study we also focused on the role of gender for types of helping behaviours. Study findings indicated that females scored higher in 'helping friend' than males. However, males scored higher in 'helping in ambiguous situations' than females. These findings demonstrate that the classical idea "men help and women receive the help"³⁵ was not supported. It might be explained that individuals are successful in helping behaviours which are convenient to their gender roles.

Findings also indicate that there was significant difference between females and males in life satisfaction. In consistent with various studies³⁶ current study showed that females more willing to express themselves satisfied with life situations than males do.

29 B. Morris, *Empathic Adolescents: Associations with Religiosity and Spirituality*, Master Thesis, Virginia: Virginia University, 2005.

30 Z. H. Khan, P. J. Watson & F. Habib, "Muslim Attitudes toward Religion, Religious Orientation and Empathy among Pakistanis", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 8 (1), 2005, pp. 49-61.

31 Ayten, *Empati ve Din*, p. 137.

32 Sec. S. L. Franzoi, *Social Psychology*, Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000.

33 C. Einolf, *The Roots of Altruism: A Gender and Life Course Perspective*, Doctorate Thesis, Virginia: University of Virginia, 2006.

34 S. Kanekar & S. M. Merchant, "Helping Norms in Relation to Religious Affiliation", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 141(5), 2001, pp. 617-626.

35 M. Crawford, M. & R. Unger, *Women and Gender: A Feminist Psychology*. 3. Edition. Boston: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2000.

36 T. Tiefenbach, & F. Kohlbacher, *Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Japan by Gender and Age*, Tokyo: German Institute for Japanese Studies, 2013.

Many religious scholars and philosophers argued that empathy and helping others are the hallmark of successful religious life. Especially, ethical teachings of religions focus on prosocial values (helping, fairness, forgiveness, justice etc.) and promote different form of philanthropic and other-helping behaviors. In psychology of religion and sociology of religion fields, various studies were performed to test the relationship between religiosity and helping behaviors and religiosity and empathy. Various studies found that religious people are nicer, and they feel more empathy towards others and their helping inclination is higher than nonreligious counterparts.³⁷ The current study findings indicated that religiosity has positive and overwhelming influence on empathy (see Table 2). On the other hand, some studies mentioned that empathy also might increase the level of religiosity by promoting the fulfilling of religious principles.³⁸ For instance, when people see an indigent person in the street and feel empathy towards him/her they might help him/her. In this regard, the helping which is the result of empathy is a fulfilling of religious principle as well. In other words, it might be said that empathy and religiosity promote each other.

The current study findings demonstrated that religiosity has positive and overwhelming effect on helping (See-Table 2). This stance was consistent with many previous studies.³⁹ This could be explained by the influence of responsible consciousness invoked by religion, and also by the influence of collectivist culture that is supported by religious teachings. Even though various studies showed that religiosity has positive effect on helping behaviors there are some studies showing that there is no relationship or negative relationship between the two variables (religiosity and helping).⁴⁰ Some other studies showed that the relationship between religiosity and helping might change depending on the kind or dimension of religiosity/religious orientation.⁴¹ All these finding were discussed

37 K. S. Gillet, Parental and Religious Influences on Adolescent Empathy and Antisocial Behavior among Latino and Euro-American Youth: An Investigation of Mediating and Moderating Effects, *Doctorate Thesis*, Texas: Texas Tect University, 2006.

38 M. L. Hoffman, "Empathy, Social Cognition and Moral Action", In W Kurtines & J. Gerwitz (Eds.), *Moral Behaviour and Development: Advances in Theory Research and Applications*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984.

39 P. Van Cappellen, V. Saroglou & M. Toth-Gauthier, "Religiosity and Prosocial Behavior Among Churchgoers: Exploring Underlying Mechanisms", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 26, 2016, pp. 19-30; J. W. K. Yeung, "Religious Involvement and Participation in Volunteering: Types, Domains and Aggregate", *Voluntas*, 28, 2017, pp. 110-138.

40 C. D. Batson, P. Schoenrade & P. Virginia, "Brotherly Love or Self-Concern? Behavioural consequences of religion", In L. D. Brown (Ed.), *Advances in the Psychology of Religion*, (pp. 185-208), New York: Pergamon Press, 1985.

41 J. Reitsma, P. Scheepers, & M. Grotenhuis, "Dimensions of Individual Religiosity and Charity: Cross-National Effect Differences in European Countries?", *Review of Religious Research*, 47 (4), 2006, pp. 347-362.

in terms of the kind of religiosity and the quality of religious education, and the level of conveying religious values to virtues area, and the kind of helping behaviors. In summary, depending on the literature, it might be easy to say that religiosity still has positive and overwhelming effect on helping behaviors (especially helping friends, neighbors, relatives and helping individuals who have same religious/cultural background).⁴² However, although many findings refer the link between helping and religiosity we need more research and evidence to clarify that relationship, especially with Muslim samples.

This study also examined the effects of religiosity, empathy and helping on life satisfaction. Consistent with various studies, this study also shows that religiosity has positive effect on life satisfaction (see Table 2 and 3). Many previous studies showed that religiosity has positive contribution to people's levels of happiness, well-being and life satisfaction.⁴³ For example, Koenig ve Larson, did meta-analysis for the studies on the relationship between health and religiosity and they found that 80% of the studies focusing on religiosity and life satisfaction relation indicate that religiosity has positive effect on life satisfaction.⁴⁴

Okulicz-Kozaryn⁴⁵ argued that the role of religiosity on life satisfaction changes from country to country. For him religiosity has more positive effect on life satisfaction and happiness in religious societies in comparison to secular societies. If we look at the data collected from Muslim countries such as Arab countries, Pakistan and Turkey⁴⁶, which are considerable more religious than many European countries,⁴⁷ we would see that there is

42 See also V. Saroglou, "Religion's Role in Prosocial Behavior: Myth and reality?", *Psychology of Religion Newsletter*, 31 (2), 2006, pp. 1-8.

43 K. L. Fiori, E. E. Browni, K. S. Cortina & T. C. Antonucci, "Locus of control as a mediator of the relationship between Religiosity and life satisfaction: Age, race, and gender differences", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 9(3), 2006, pp. 239-263; A. Ayten & H. Ferhan, "Forgiveness, Religiousness, and Life Satisfaction: An Empirical Study on Turkish and Jordanian University Students", *Spiritual Psychology and Counseling*, 1(1), 2016, pp. 75-84.

44 See. C. Hackney & G. Sanders, "Religiosity and Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis of Recent Studies", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42 (1), 2003, pp. 43-55.

45 A Okulicz-Kozaryn, "Religiosity and life satisfaction across nations", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 13(2), 2012, pp. 155-169.

46 A. M. Abdel-Khalek, "Happiness, health, and religiosity: significant associations among Lebanese adolescents", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 17(1), 2014, pp. 30-38; A. Ayten, "Din ve Sağlık: Bireysel Dindarlık, Sağlık Davranışları ve Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma [Religion and Health: A Study on the relationship between individual religiosity, health behavior and life satisfaction]", *Din Bilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 13(3), 2014, pp. 7-31.

47 For instance, the percentage of believing in God in Turkey is 98 % while 25 % in England, 20 % in France, 15 % in Denmark and the level of accepting him/herself as religious is 88% in Turkey while 40 % in England, 25 % in Denmark, 28 % in France, See. Ali Çarkoğlu ve Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Türkiye'de Dindarlık: Uluslararası Bir Karşılaştırma*,

a positive correlation between life satisfaction and religiosity. This might be explained from recognizing that the positive social support of religion to human life and human relations are more effective in these countries than other secular countries. Moreover, in religious societies people are more likely to attribute their good emotions (happiness, well-being, life satisfaction etc.) to religion than people in secular societies.

The findings of the present study indicated that religiosity and empathy were positively related to life satisfaction, and the findings also demonstrated that empathy and religiosity were mediating factors on the relationship between helping and life satisfaction (see Table 4). That is, the roles of empathy and religiosity were more effective than helping on life satisfaction.

Research Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are a number of limitations to the current study. **(a)** Due to the present study focusing on participants' own perceptions of their values, attitudes and their behaviors being assessed as such, the researcher believes that if experimental studies were used there would be possibly different conclusions. Therefore, studies showing that there is a positive correlation between tentative religiosity and tentative helping behavior, especially in Muslim samples, is needed. **(b)** The scope of this study only focuses on teachers in secondary schools and students. It is very important to clarify the relationship between religiosity and helping in other ages and occupations. **(c)** In this study, some personal factors such as empathic inclination, and religiosity were examined. Furthermore, socio-cultural elements which might be effective on the process of helping should be studied. **(d)** In-group and out-group helping were not examined in this study. It might be beneficial to study the relationship between religiosity and in-group/out-group helping in terms of understanding the influence of religiosity on universal compassion. **(e)** Lastly, the donation of blood and organ as a helping behavior, which is still a problematic area, should be studied in relation to Muslim religiosity. Finally, to truly explain the relationship between religiosity and helping behavior amongst Muslims it is vital to have more qualitative studies, which will give in-depth findings to explain these links.

İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Araştırma Raporu, 2009, pp. 8, 20; According to Global Religiosity Index the percentage of those people accepting themselves as religious is 84 % in Pakistan, 88 % in Iraq, 37 % in France and 29 % in Switzerland. See. WIN-Gallup International, Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism-2012, s. 15; In Saudi Arabia the percentage of people who has seen themselves religious was 99 % see. www.asbar.com//ar/studies-research/public-studies/71.article.htm (12.02.2014).

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