

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON THE MORAL AND LEGAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS OF YOUTH

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**Abstract:** This article explores the influence of religion on the moral and legal consciousness of youth in the context of globalization. The study examines how religious teachings shape ethical reasoning, legal awareness, and civic responsibility among young people in Uzbekistan. Using a mixed-method approach that combines surveys, interviews, and observation, the research demonstrates that religious knowledge and faith contribute to the development of honesty, empathy, justice, and respect for the rule of law. The findings show that youth with stronger religious engagement are more likely to act ethically, obey laws voluntarily, and participate actively in social life. The article concludes that integrating moral and spiritual education with civic and legal training is essential for forming a generation of ethically conscious, law-abiding citizens in modern society.

**Keywords:** Religion; Youth; Moral Values; Legal Consciousness; Ethics; Globalization; Civic Responsibility; Uzbekistan.

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqola globallashuv sharoitida dinning yoshlar axloqiy va huquqiy ongiga ta’sirini o’rganishga bag’ishlangan. Tadqiqotda diniy ta’limotlarning yoshlarning axloqiy tafakkuri, huquqiy savodxonligi va fuqarolik mas’uliyatini shakllantirishdagi o’rni tahlil qilinadi. So’rovnama, suhbat va kuzatish metodlarini o’z ichiga olgan aralash tadqiqot yondashuvi asosida olib borilgan izlanishlar shuni ko’rsatdiki, diniy bilim va e’tiqod yoshlar orasida halollik, empatiya,adolat va qonunlarga hurmat kabi fazilatlarni kuchaytiradi. Natijalarga ko’ra, diniy e’tiqodi mustahkam yoshlar odatda axloqan to‘g’ri yo’l tutadi, qonunlarga ongli ravishda rioya etadi va ijtimoiy hayotda faol ishtirok etadi. Maqolada xulosa qilinishicha, ma’naviy va axloqiy tarbiyani huquqiy va fuqarolik ta’limi bilan uyg’unlashtirish — huquqiy madaniyatli, axloqan yetuk avlodni shakllantirishning muhim omilidir.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** din; yoshlar; axloqiy qadriyatlar; huquqiy ong; etika; globallashuv; fuqarolik mas’uliyati; O’zbekiston.

**Аннотация:** Данная статья посвящена исследованию влияния религии на моральное и правовое сознание молодежи в условиях глобализации. В работе рассматривается, как религиозные учения формируют этическое мышление, правовую осведомленность и гражданскую ответственность среди молодежи Узбекистана. Используя смешанный метод исследования (опросы, интервью и наблюдения), автор приходит к выводу, что религиозные знания и вера способствуют развитию таких качеств, как честность, эмпатия, справедливость и уважение к закону. Результаты показывают, что молодежь с более высоким



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уровнем религиозности чаще действует нравственно, добровольно соблюдает законы и активно участвует в общественной жизни. В статье подчеркивается, что интеграция духовно-нравственного воспитания с гражданским и правовым образованием является важным условием формирования поколения законопослушных и нравственно зрелых граждан современного общества.

**Ключевые слова:** религия; молодежь; нравственные ценности; правовое сознание; этика; глобализация; гражданская ответственность; Узбекистан.

**Introduction.** In the rapidly changing landscape of globalization, the moral and legal consciousness of youth has become a central concern for educators, policymakers, and scholars alike. The transformation of values under the influence of digital media, consumer culture, and individualism has challenged the moral foundations that traditionally guided young people's behavior. In this context, religion continues to play a crucial role as both a moral compass and a social regulator that shapes the ethical and legal awareness of new generations. Throughout history, religion has functioned not only as a system of belief but also as a normative framework that guides human interaction, defines acceptable behavior, and promotes social justice. In many societies, including Uzbekistan, religious values have deeply influenced conceptions of law, morality, and communal responsibility. Despite the secular nature of modern state systems, religious teachings continue to nurture virtues such as honesty, compassion, patience, and respect for justice — qualities essential for maintaining both moral integrity and legal compliance among youth. However, contemporary youth face unique challenges. The influence of globalization, technological advancement, and cultural pluralism often leads to moral relativism, where ethical standards become subjective and unstable. Many young people find themselves navigating conflicting messages between traditional spiritual teachings and modern secular lifestyles. As a result, questions arise about how religion can continue to guide moral decision-making and legal consciousness in a world that increasingly prioritizes individual freedom and material success. The significance of this study lies in exploring how religion, as a source of spiritual and moral authority, contributes to the development of lawful and ethical behavior among youth. By examining these dynamics in the sociocultural context of Uzbekistan — a country with rich Islamic traditions and an emerging legal consciousness — this study seeks to provide insights applicable to other post-Soviet and Muslim-majority societies as well.

The main objectives of this paper are threefold:

1. To analyze the role of religion in shaping the moral and ethical values of youth.
2. To examine the relationship between religious knowledge and legal awareness.
3. To identify how integrating moral-spiritual education with civic and legal instruction can enhance youth behavior and social harmony. This research contributes to the global academic discourse by demonstrating that religion, far from being a relic of the

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past, remains a vital force in shaping socially responsible and law-abiding citizens. Its findings may inform policymakers and educators in developing holistic youth development strategies that harmonize moral education, legal literacy, and spiritual growth.

**Theoretical Framework.** The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the interdisciplinary relationship between religion, morality, and legal consciousness. From both sociological and philosophical perspectives, religion has historically served as a moral regulator and a source of legitimacy for social norms and laws. Classical sociologists such as Émile Durkheim and Max Weber emphasized that religion forms the moral basis of collective life by instilling a sense of obligation and shared values among individuals. According to Durkheim (1912), religious beliefs create a moral community — a collective conscience that binds individuals to a set of shared ethical standards. This communal moral structure not only shapes behavior but also supports the development of social order and justice. Similarly, Weber (1905) argued that religious ethics, particularly in the Protestant tradition, influenced the formation of rational-legal systems and modern social institutions. His theory of the “Protestant ethic” illustrates how spiritual principles can inspire disciplined, lawful, and responsible conduct — a framework that can also be applied to Islamic moral teachings. In the context of Islamic thought, religion and law are inherently intertwined. The concept of *Shari‘a* (Islamic law) represents a comprehensive code that governs not only religious rituals but also moral and legal behavior. The Qur'an and Hadith establish clear principles for justice, honesty, and social responsibility, while emphasizing that obedience to the law is both a civic and spiritual duty. This unity between the divine and the legal reinforces the idea that morality and legality are not separate domains, but rather complementary dimensions of human conduct. Modern theories of moral development, such as James Fowler's (1981) “Stages of Faith” and Lawrence Kohlberg's (1984) “Stages of Moral Reasoning,” further explain how faith and moral reasoning evolve through cognitive and social interaction. Fowler posits that faith is not merely belief, but an active framework for interpreting life experiences and making ethical decisions. Kohlberg, on the other hand, identifies moral development as a gradual process where individuals move from external obedience (authority-based morality) toward internalized principles (autonomous morality). Religion, in this sense, provides the moral content and emotional grounding that guide this transformation. From a legal-ethical standpoint, the development of legal consciousness among youth depends on both external norms (laws and regulations) and internalized values (conscience, empathy, responsibility). The interplay between these two dimensions reflects what Habermas (1984) calls the “moral-legal discourse,” in which legitimacy is achieved through rational agreement and shared ethical understanding. Religion contributes to this discourse by providing moral legitimacy to laws, thus strengthening voluntary compliance and social cohesion. In the sociocultural context of Uzbekistan, these theoretical foundations take on particular relevance. After decades of secular Soviet governance, the country is

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witnessing a gradual revival of spiritual and moral education. This process reaffirms the value of religious principles in promoting lawful behavior, tolerance, and respect for human dignity. Consequently, religion functions not as an alternative to the law, but as a moral complement that reinforces ethical and legal stability in society.

**Methodology.** This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore how religion influences the moral and legal consciousness of youth in Uzbekistan. The mixed-method design enables a deeper understanding of both the measurable patterns of youth attitudes and the underlying reasons for their moral and legal perceptions.

The research focuses on three interrelated dimensions:

1. Moral consciousness — the awareness and internalization of ethical values such as honesty, empathy, and justice.
2. Legal consciousness — understanding and respect for legal norms, civic duties, and the rule of law.
3. Religious influence — the extent to which religious education, beliefs, and practices shape moral and legal reasoning.

The study was conducted among university students in the Fergana region of Uzbekistan, a demographically diverse area with strong historical and cultural ties to Islam. A total of 200 participants aged between 18 and 25 were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across gender, educational background, and level of religious engagement.

Participants were categorized into three groups:

Group A: Students with formal religious education (graduates of madrasahs or Islamic studies programs).

Group B: Students identifying as religious but without formal religious education.

Group C: Students identifying as secular or minimally religious.

Data were gathered through the following instruments:

1. Questionnaire Survey: A structured questionnaire with 30 items measured respondents' attitudes toward moral values (e.g., honesty, fairness, responsibility) and legal norms (e.g., law obedience, civic participation, human rights).

2. Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with 25 participants to gain qualitative insights into their personal experiences, religious motivations, and views on the relationship between religion, ethics, and law.

3. Observation: Participant observation was carried out in academic and social settings to examine how religious and moral values are manifested in daily behavior.

The questionnaire was designed using Likert-scale responses (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), while interviews were analyzed thematically to identify recurring moral and legal patterns in the participants' reasoning.

Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation) and correlation analysis to determine the

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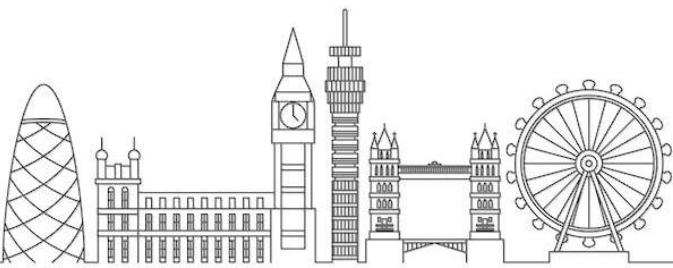
relationship between levels of religious engagement and moral/legal awareness. The qualitative data from interviews were coded and categorized according to emerging themes such as moral empathy, rule obedience, and social responsibility. Triangulation was applied to validate findings by comparing survey results with interview and observational data. This ensured a more reliable and multidimensional understanding of the role religion plays in shaping moral and legal awareness among youth. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Fergana State University. The study acknowledges several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single region, which may limit the generalizability of findings to the entire country. Second, the self-reported nature of the data may have led to social desirability bias, particularly regarding sensitive topics such as religion and law. Nonetheless, the mixed-method approach mitigated these weaknesses by incorporating multiple data sources and perspectives.

**Results and Discussion.** The analysis of the collected data reveals a clear correlation between religious engagement and the strength of moral and legal consciousness among young respondents. Out of 200 participants, 67% identified themselves as practicing believers, 23% as moderately religious, and 10% as secular or non-religious. Across all categories, religion was perceived as a significant moral influence, though its impact on legal awareness varied according to the level of religious education and involvement.

The findings of this research confirm that religion continues to be a powerful moral and legal influence in the lives of young people. The results demonstrate that religious education and practice significantly enhance moral discipline, empathy, and respect for legal norms. The data from Fergana states university students reflect this principle: young people who participate in religious learning exhibit greater moral clarity and social responsibility than those who do not. A key contribution of this study is its examination of the intersection between religious ethics and legal awareness. In the post-Soviet context of Uzbekistan, where decades of secular ideology once minimized religion's public role, a gradual revival of moral and spiritual education is underway. This study's findings suggest that such revival is contributing to a re-balancing of moral and legal culture among youth. As Tursunov (2019) noted, the integration of religious and civic education promotes responsibility and moral integrity in post-transition societies. Religion here does not contradict state law; rather, it strengthens legal awareness by connecting it with inner conviction. Youth who perceive law as aligned with moral truth are more likely to obey it voluntarily. This synergy between faith and law represents a foundation for sustainable social order — one based not only on authority but also on conscience.

Overall, the findings reinforce the argument that religion plays a dual role:

1. As a moral compass, it shapes ethical reasoning and personal integrity.
2. As a social regulator, it reinforces legal order through moral legitimacy.



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These insights have profound implications for policymakers and educators.

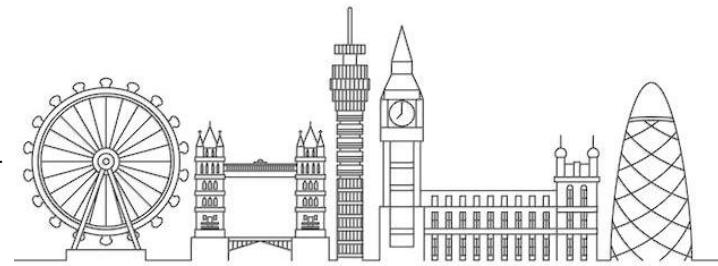
Integrating religious and moral education into civic and legal curricula could cultivate a new generation of ethically grounded, law-abiding citizens who respect both divine and human justice.

The results of this study carry profound implications for the formation of ethical and legal culture among young people, particularly in societies where religion remains a vital component of social identity. By illustrating how religious education enhances both moral discipline and respect for the rule of law, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about how moral and legal systems can be harmonized in modern governance.

In conclusion, religion remains a vital foundation for moral and legal consciousness in an era of globalization and value transformation. By aligning faith, morality, and law, societies can cultivate not only disciplined citizens but also compassionate human beings. Future research may expand on this work by conducting cross-cultural comparisons or longitudinal studies to examine how religious and moral values evolve over time in response to social change.

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