SOCIAL TABOOS AND SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENTS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWAA, PAKISTAN

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Abstract
This paper investigates the relationship between social taboos and socialization of students at secondary school level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. There are different socio-cultural factors related to the presence and practice of social taboos which deeply affect the socialization of Pakistani youth. The practice of taboos is manifested in the form of jargons, terms, euphemisms and different metaphoric expressions in the society. Over the years, this practice has resulted in confusions among the researchers and scholars regarding its deeper effects on socialization of Pakistani youth. This study was purposefully designed to specifically explore the relationship between social taboos and socialization of students. Using a correlation design, the study surveyed attitudes of a randomly sampled 300 secondary school teachers in district Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The research examined the relationship between the following variables, social taboos as independent variable, socialization and its two dimensions: context specific socialization and general socialization as dependent variables. To examine correlation between the variables, Hierarchical Regression Analysis and ANOVA were used as statistical tools. Findings of the study showed that there was a significantly high

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negative correlation between social taboos and socialization of students and its two dimensions.

**Keywords:** Social taboos, effect, socialization, context specific, general, correlation

**Introduction**

Human behaviour is governed by many social factors such as affiliations, norms, practices, beliefs and actions (Strong, 2006). Societies have often shared values and standards which are recognized as acceptable norms for the members of the society to practice (Zia, 2012). A society or culture basically guides the behaviour of the individuals through these norms and practices. The group of such guidelines is typically called as social norms or taboos. These norms and taboos have a deeper effect on the lives of the members of the society. They behave, dress, eat and pattern their lives according to these social norms. So, these social norms are the driving forces behind the functioning of societies and individuals (Steiner, 1976; Uzma, 2008).

These social norms play a key role in developing the patterns of human personality and behaviours called socialization or humanization (Young, 2006). Socialization is a process of development of individuals in which they come in contact with other members of the society, practices and beliefs. This interaction forms the foundation of the ideology or social temperament of the individuals which in turn plays a vital in the development of personality of a person. There is a close relationship between social norms and socialization (Chaim, Uri, & Moshe, 2011).

An extensive literature is available on social norms and taboos in different societies around the world. However, anthropologists have documented and analyzed the taboos in various ways. The term taboo basically is a Polynesian origin and is taken from the words ‘tabu’ or ‘tapu’ in Tongan language. It was introduced to English language in eighteen century. Encyclopedia Britannica has defined taboos “the prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred and considered or too dangerous and accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake” (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2012).

Taboo is a prohibition of certain social action which may cause violation of some norms commonly held by all in the society or which may call the wrath of a supernatural punishment believed by members of the society. Broadly speaking, it is based on a belief that such behaviour is a scared or accursed for others in the society to practice. Such types of
social prohibitions are present in human society since time immemorial. In some societies, such prohibitions are related to an area of human activity or a custom which is sacred or forbidden or deemed objectionable by the society in general (Fiske & Philip, 1997).

Studies have revealed that social taboos undergo changes over time. Some taboos may disappear and other may become stronger or even dominate the prevailing customs of the society (Johann, 2002). For example, life insurance and child insurance remained taboos for a long time in some societies around the world and became acceptable in later periods (Zeltzer & Viviana, 1981). In some societies, trading human organs is treated as a taboo in some societies and is strictly prohibited. However, in recent times, some parts of human body have become acceptable. There are even some claims that famous incest taboos are fast disappearing in some complex societies around the world (Zia, 2012).

There are numerous explanations for the origin of social taboos. Anthropologists argue that the origin of taboos is culturally rooted. The alternative argument is held by psychoanalysts. They place emphasis on the role of strong sub-conscious prohibitions that pass through generations and constitute taboos (Freud, 1955). The main question centers on the relationship between social taboos and its dimensions such as general and specific socialization. General socialization is the broad orientation of an individual with the overall norms and principles in the society in relation to other societies. Whereas, specific socialization is the specific orientation of an individual with the norms, practices in a particular society (Young, 2008).

One answer is that taboos are strong social norms that are viewed as sacred by some societies (Durrant, 2000). However, in other societies, when behaviour of an individual is diverted form a particular norm, it is taken as violation of a social norm or taboo by other members of the society and may lead to punishment for the deviation. This act of deviation or prohibition impacts the social development of an individual. When the behaviour of an individual diverges or deviates from a social norm it has its effect on other members of the society (Khursheed, Mamuna, Mahtab, & Tahir, 2013).

Taboos are essential element of a social identity. There are severe social sanctions behind taboos. These are enforced by social punishment techniques. Some of the most famous social punishments are reaction by other members of the society which may lead to social isolation or social banishment of the violator. This social reclusion as a result of the social repulsion leads to depression and social isolation on
the part of some individual. Consequently, this causes the appearance of disgruntled elements in the society which may lead to social chaos in society (Benabou & Jean, 2004).

Taboos are an important part of social identity. The identity part includes association with certain norms which characterizes the whole personality of an individual. Identification is an important element of socialization. The desire to maintain an identity is defined by the association with certain social norms prevailing in the society. This desire shapes the social development of an individual (Bott & Jejeebhoy, 2001).

As mentioned above, some social taboos are prohibited by law and religious sanctions and their transgression may lead to severe punishment, for example, trading in human organs, dealing in pornography, under age sex and so on (Qanbar, 2011). Generally speaking, in every society of the world, there are three types of incentives that govern human behavior such as monetary incentives, social incentives and legal incentives. The basic purpose of these is to prohibit behaviors from violation of the social norms. Literature says that taboos have an important aspect of social interaction. The power of a taboo is influenced by the percentage of individuals who deviate or violate the social norm or even thinking of deviation (Fessler & Carlos, 2003).

The sensitivity of social taboo varies from society to society and culture to culture. Social taboos also exist in Pakistani society. A study report has indicated that Pakistan has the largest cohort of young people, that is, 25 million between 15 to 25 ages (Government of Pakistan, 2001). Research on adolescents in Pakistan related to their socialization is still a new topic for researchers. Social taboos restrict the open discussion on sexuality or other related issues. There is a dearth of research on social taboos in Pakistan (Khan, 2000).

Like many South Asian countries Pakistan social taboos are protected by cultural, religious sanctions and legal procedures. For example, female sexuality is strictly controlled by male elders and is the basic foundation of many social norms and values (Khan, 1998; Khan, 2000). Another example is that unmarried girls are put in reclusions (Purdah) from puberty onward (Bott & Jejeehoy, 2001; Khan, 2000). Due to family social taboos, many adolescents in Pakistan are poorly informed about sexuality, marital life, sexual issues, reproductive biology, low level of school attendance, lack of sex education and health. All these exacerbate and confound ignorance on these matters.
Social taboos (McCauley & Salter, 1995; Khan, 2000). In Pakistan, there exists no formal curriculum in school for sex education (Khan, 2000).

Earlier, a study on taboos conducted in China found various forms of taboos such as quasi-taboo and non-taboo, sex and anti-religion. Another study was conducted by Hongxu and Al-Khatib (1995) in Jordan on linguistic taboos. The results of their study indicated that socio-cultural factors determine the words used during conversation which are allowed and vice-versa.

Mbaya (2002) studied social norms and customs in Oromo culture in Ethiopia. The study found it was prohibited in that culture to mention names for husbands, wife and certain in-laws names. Instead, they use substitute words full of beauty and respect in place of the real names. In another study Siegfried (2006) found that American society observes some categories of verbal taboos such sex and bodily functions. The existence of social taboos is present almost in all societies of the world. In Yemeni society, a person who violates the basic family norms and respect for elders is subjected to sanctions of law. Whether a taboo should be used or what should be the degree of its acceptance or prohibition depends on socio-cultural, religious factors which are deeply rooted in that society (Holmes, 1992).

On the basis of the above literature review, the following research framework was developed to test.

Figure 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social taboos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General socialization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives of the study

Following are the main questions of this study:

- To examine the effect of social taboos on socialization and its two dimensions on students in secondary schools of Malakand division, Pakistan.
Subsidiary questions
- To assess the effect of terrorism on general socialization of students.
- To assess the effect of terrorism on specific socialization of students.

Hypothesis
On the basis of the objectives and literature review it is hypothesized that:
1. There is a relationship between social taboos and socialization of students in secondary schools of Malakand division, Pakistan.
2. There is a relationship between social taboos and general socialization.
3. There is a relationship between social taboos and general socialization.

Methodology
This study uses a correlation design and a cross sectional method collecting data on the variables. For this purpose, the study surveyed 300 secondary school teachers (100 female teachers and 200 male teachers) from Malakand division Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Self-administered questionnaire was developed and piloted for validation and reliability before using for collection of data from the respondents.

The Alpha value was found to be .72 which was found satisfactory to collect data based on the three variables such as social taboos, general socialization and specific socialization. Furthermore, the questionnaire items were cross checked by two PhD experts in the field. Finally, the items were designed on Fiver Point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (value =1 to strongly agree (value =5).

Statistical software SPSS was used to analyze the data. To see the relationship between the variables ANOVA was applied along with Hierarchical Regression Analysis. The teachers were randomly sampled. Simple random was used to select respondents and to collect data. In this type of sampling every member of the population has the same chance of being selected. This provides a wider opportunity for the researcher to reach out to a good representative number of subjects which indirectly enhances the reliability of the data.
Data analysis

The aim of this paper was to assess the effect of social taboos on general as well as specific socialization of students in secondary schools at Malakand division, KPK, Pakistan. Detail of the analysis of the variables and their interrelationship is provided below along with the findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between independent variable (social taboos) and dependent variables (socialization and its two dimensions: general socialization and specific socialization) of students.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis of social taboos and socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Socialization</th>
<th>General socialization</th>
<th>Specific socialization</th>
<th>Social Taboos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General socialization</td>
<td>0.712*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific socialization</td>
<td>0.651*</td>
<td>0.732*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Taboos</td>
<td>0.623*</td>
<td>0.593</td>
<td>0.722</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 show that social taboos are significantly positively correlated with socialization and its two dimensions: general and specific) of students and significant at p value of 0.01.

Regression Analysis of variables

Regression analysis was measured by testing the research hypotheses. The results for each variable are discussed as under.

H1: There is a relationship between social taboos and socialization
Table 2: Regression analysis of correlation between social taboos and socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social taboos</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>269.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 show the value of coefficient beta is calculated as 0.67 which shows a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and socialization. The value of R-square is calculated as 0.685 showing 68.5% variations in the dependant variable (social taboos) are explained by independent variable (socialization). The model’s goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 269.0. Hence, H₁ was accepted and it is proved that social a taboo is significantly positively correlated with socialization.

H₂: There is a relationship between social taboo and general socialization

Table 3: Regression analysis of correlation between social taboo and socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social taboos</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>277.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 show the value of coefficient beta is calculated as 0.66 which shows a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and general socialization. The value of R-square is calculated as 0.821 showing 82.1% variation in the dependant variable (general socialization) is explained by independent variable (social taboos). The model’s goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 277.0. Hence, H₂ was accepted and it is proved that social taboos are significantly positively correlated with general socialization.
H₃: There is a relationship between social taboo and specific socialization

Table 4: Regression analysis of correlation between social taboo and socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social taboos</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>257.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 show the value of coefficient beta is calculated as 0.65 which shows a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and specific socialization. The value of R-square is calculated as 0.731 showing 73.1% variation in the dependant variable (specific socialization) is explained by independent variable (social taboos). The model’s goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 257.0. Hence, H₃ was accepted and it is proved that social taboos are significantly positively correlated with specific socialization.

Findings and discussion

This study investigated correlations between social taboos, socialization and its two dimensions: general socialization and specific socialization education in secondary schools at Malakand division KPK, Pakistan.

Testing the first hypothesis (There is a relationship between social taboos and socialization) showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and socialization. The finding of this study further refers to the following insights:

- First, social taboos are important ingredient of the social norms and are protected by the cultural and customary sanctions which enable the individuals to get accustomed to these and learn to live in a society.
- Second, the results of this study also support the previous studies that social taboos are essential components of the societal
patterns which shape the personality development of an individual in a particular society.

Testing the second hypothesis \textit{(There is a relationship between social taboos and general socialization)} showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and general socialization.

The finding of this study further refers to the following insights:

- First, social taboos are generally prevalent in every society of the world. Hence, interaction of the individual with other cultures and people also plays a key role in the socialization process.

Testing the third hypothesis \textit{(There is a relationship between social taboos and specific socialization)} showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between social taboos and specific socialization.

The finding of this study further refers to the following insights:

- First, social taboos in a particular society are specifically protected and sanctioned by cultural mores, customary rules or by legal or religious injunctions. In typical Pakistani society, some of the social taboos as discussed in the above literature are legally as well as morally sanctioned. This situation educates the young people during the education to adapt to them with or without personal desires.

\textbf{Conclusion and future recommendations}

This study found strongly positive correlations between social taboos and socialization and its two dimensions: general socialization and specific socialization. The results of this study indicate that social taboos play a key role in the socialization process of an individual. On the basis of broad literature review, this study, additionally provides a deeper understanding of how young people acquire different skills and develop behaviours by interacting with social taboos in the in within and without a typical Pakistani society. The results of this study provide insights to look at other aspects of the problem such as role of taboos in
socialization of female and male as genders, taboos as social barriers to socialization and so on.

This study was conducted based on cross-sectional design for which data were collected just once during the study from a specific geographical area with a small sample base. Hence, it cannot be generalized to other places. It is recommended that future researchers may use the same design with more sample size and qualitative or longitudinal method. This will help in deeper understanding of the effect of social taboos on socialization of young people at secondary school level in Malakand division, KPK, Pakistan.

Pakistani is a multi-cultural and multi-racial society. It does not reflect the truth related to the prevalence of social taboos in other parts of the country. Hence, this study was conducted only in one district of Malakand division. Future study may extend the scope of the study to other parts of Pakistan which will provide much deeper and broader understanding of the problem and its effect on the socialization of Pakistani youth.
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