
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND YOUTH VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG YOUNG ARAB STUDENTS IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH RELIGIOUS DE-RADICALIZATION

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Abstract

The study examines the effect of religion, religious devotion, observance and compliance on violent extremism among young Arab students. Findings showed a significant impact of religion type, religious observance, religious devotion and religious compliance on youth violent extremism ($F = 204.133$, $\alpha = 0.00$). Results showed a uniquely significant contribution of religion type ($t = -21.893$, $\alpha = 0.00$), religious observance ($t = 7.232$, $\alpha = 0.00$), and religious devotion ($t = 10.088$, $\alpha = 0.00$), except for religious compliance ($t = -1.566$, $\alpha = 0.00$), on youth violent extremism. Significant differences were found in each violent extremism dimension attributed to religion type, religious observance, devotion and compliance. Muslims who identify as Sunni scored highly on the scale of violent extremism across all dimensions, followed by Muslims who identify as Shiites and Christians. Extremist violence and religion are often linked. Except for very weak compliance, as a person's level of religious observance, devotion and compliance increases, their violent extremism also increases. Finally, females were significantly higher than males on the violent extremist scale. The study's implications call attention to including religion in youth's formal and informal education and recruitment to prevent the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, especially in high schools and colleges. They involve religious actors and those who practice religion in the fight against violent extremism. Reforming religion education is needed to prevent violent extremism.

Keywords: religion, violent extremism, young youth, Arab World

1. Introduction

Religion plays a significant role in developing violent extremist beliefs and actions by providing a source of collective identity and solidarity, aiding in

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mobilization, organizing and giving meaning to disaffection and grievance, legitimizing extremist acts and intensifying conflicts. Religion can aid in recruiting young people who have been blocked from embracing other forms of identity, such as European second- and third-generation Muslims. Religion can also intensify and raise the stakes of a conflict, transforming it into something of grand and transhistorical significance [1]. The relationship between religion and violent extremism is expressed as: “The relationship between religion and violence is complex and defies any neat account of direct causation. In some cases of violent extremism, religion is not a primary driver; in others, it may be more prominent. Therefore, efforts to prevent or counter radicalization and extremism need to ‘right-size’ religion as both a contributing factor and part of the solution.” [2]

The literature review primarily discusses terrorism, neglecting radicalization or violent extremism. Violent extremism involves adopting extremist values and using violence to achieve societal changes, potentially leading to terrorist activities. It encompasses a global transformation from one condition to another [3]. Academic interest in the effects of religious beliefs and thoughts on violent extremism, especially Muslim youth, surged post-2001, aiming to understand the connection between Islam as a religion and violent extremism and terrorism. The debate surrounding religious practices, preaching, violent extremism, terrorism and its perpetrators is ongoing. Violent extremism, while associated with terrorism, is conceptually and chronologically immature [4]. The rise of violent extremism threatens national security and social cohesion. It necessitates the proactive role of education, particularly Islamic religious education and practices, in encountering and preventing its spread and risks. De-radicalization is needed to minimize violent extremism and promote peaceful values through various approaches, including educational planning and criminological and sociological approaches. It involves various parties, such as parents, teachers, and the community, ensuring that religion is a peaceful, harmonious and tolerable institution [5].

Violent extremism is a gradual personal and social process of personal and political transformation, often requiring progression through stages. It is not quick or easy, but incidents like discrimination, deprivation, marginalization, exclusion, strains, perceived grievances, attacks on Islam, or moral crises can accelerate it. For example, female suicide bombers in Iraq often resort to terrorism due to family members’ deaths [6]. In violent extremism, extreme beliefs are adopted to achieve specific religious and political goals, often from a diverse population with varying education, family background, socio-economic status, and income. Violent extremism is not specific to any national group and often leads to homegrown terrorism, where perpetrators are born and raised in the country they wish to attack. This phenomenon has gained attention in the past decade, with autonomous homegrown groups responsible for 78% of jihadi terrorism plots in the West from 2003 to 2008. Western security agencies consider homegrown jihadists to be top threats to their national security [5].

Religion is most societies' central pillar of any social structure and belief system. Its importance stems from being a reference point to the social behaviour and actions of the people. Laws and most social values and ethics have emerged from religion. The people's zero-order belief is built on religious values, which people take unquestionably and for granted. Some extremist thoughts and practices are energized and justified by religious beliefs, developing antipathy toward the target victim and creating a mandate for terrorist action. Religion can play a protective role or be a path to violent extremism. ISIS, for example, used religious clauses and articles and Fatwa to justify their terrorist acts, such as burning to death the Jordanian Pilot Moath al Kasasbeh [7]. In order to combat violent extremism, proactive measures should be taken beyond security and intelligence measures. This is evident in encounter and de-radicalization programs in Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian and European countries. These programs aim to eradicate and disengage violent extremists and militants, who may not necessarily change their beliefs. Some argue that disengagement is more realistic, especially for extremists who are motivated by religious obligations [8].

As Sirseloudi described the radicalization in Europe, "lack of political participation, repression of the opposition, social injustice resulting in high youth unemployment, and a conflict over values between the western-oriented elite and the majority population created fertile ground for the rise of Islamist mass movements. External factors like the Arab defeats in the Israeli-Arab wars, the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the war in Afghanistan also contributed to a boost in Islamist opposition. Groups claiming the unity of state and religion (Islam) and pursuing the postulate 'Islam is the solution' via military means triggered conflicts." [9]

A study by Al-Badayneh and Al-Hassan revealed a significant relationship between religious practices and Jordanian college student's radicalization (social, religious, political, violent and personal radicalization) [7]. Moreover, a robust and significant relationship exists between all types of radicalization and each religious devotion: religious observance (with exception to personal radicalization) and religious impact on an individual's life (with exception to political radicalization). Findings showed that religious attitudes significantly impact the development of radical behaviour and actions. Results showed that religious behaviour impacted general radicalization, social radicalization, religious radicalization, political radicalization, violent radicalization, and group radicalization. Extremism in students' beliefs and thoughts can be seen as a semi-zero-order belief; students' beliefs and radical ideas are transmitted to them by their parents, teachers, colleagues, and social networks. Radicalization developed in incubators like families, schools, and universities within smaller groups where bonding, peer pressure, and indoctrination gradually changed the individual's view to a radical view.

Regardless of the sizable number of terrorist attacks in the last decade in Jordan, Jordanians' fear of terrorists or the risk of dying in a terrorist attack in Jordan is almost non-existent. What drives the young, educated student to

sympathize with and support terrorist groups like ISIS? Sympathy and support for terrorist groups like ISIS among youths in Jordan can be understood by tracing its roots to the micro (personal factors), meso (institutional factors), and macro (social and cultural factors) [10]. A study by Al-Badayneh et al found that 59% of students displayed radical ideas, focusing on conservative and extreme ideologies [10]. The majority of students approved of violence and held extreme views. 69.4% of students were concerned about the rise of extremist organizations in Jordan, while 43.4% feared falling victim to ISIS. Almost 10% of students demonstrated behavioural or material support for ISIS, ranging from financial donations to offering support for operations and personal needs. Stress, victimization, justification, violent extremist beliefs, radical thoughts, and conservative beliefs all significantly affected behavioural and material support for ISIS.

2. Theoretical review

2.1. Selected theoretical models

2.1.1. The prevent pyramid

Radicalization or extremism can be seen as a gradual progression up a pyramidal model, with higher levels indicating increased radicalization but a decrease in the number of involved individuals (Figure 1). Tier 4 active terrorists are relatively few compared to those who sympathize with their beliefs and feelings. The model suggests that individuals at Tier 3 of the pyramid may support those at Tier 2 and inspire others, while at Tier 3, a larger group, such as young people in the criminal justice system, is considered vulnerable [11, 12].

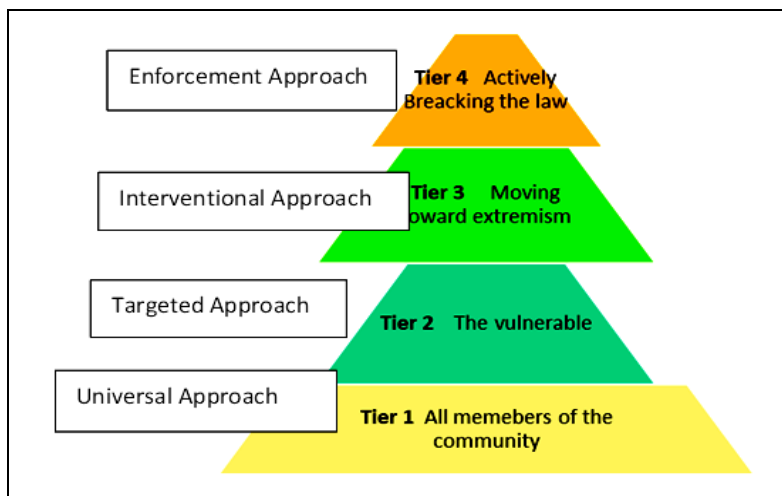


Figure 1. Marc Sageman's four-stage process.

Sageman's analysis [11] of Al Qaida-influenced radicalization to violence consists of four factors: moral outrage, specific interpretation of the world, resonance with personal experiences, and mobilization through networks. Factors like unemployment, boredom, and radicalization of young Muslims involve a multifaceted process of moral outrage, interpretation, resonance, and mobilization through networks [5, 6].

2.1.2. Taarnby's eight-stage recruitment process

Taarnby outlines the recruitment process of the Hamburg cell before 11, 2001, based on Sageman's work [11], which consisted of self-generating elements [12]. Individual alienation and marginalization:

1. individual alienation and marginalization,
2. a spiritual quest,
3. a process of radicalization,
4. meeting and associating with like-minded people,
5. gradual seclusion and cell formation,
6. acceptance of violence as a legitimate political means,
7. connection with a gatekeeper in the know, and finally
8. going operational.

Taarnby's radicalization process structure examines the stages from intent to action, with operational elements evident in the last four phases.

2.1.3. McCauley and Moskaleiko's 12 mechanisms of political radicalization

McCauley and Moskaleiko identified 12 mechanisms of political radicalization across individual, group and mass levels [13]. The authors argue that political radicalization involves multiple pathways leading individuals and groups to terrorism without providing a unitary theory or conceptual framework [13, 14].

2.1.4. Borum's four-stage model of the terrorist mind-set

The model explains how grievances and vulnerabilities are turned into hatred towards a target group and vice versa. It involves framing unsatisfying events as unjust, blaming the target, and vilifying the responsible party, facilitating aggression (Figure 2).

2.1.5. Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism

Moghaddam created the 'Staircase to Terrorism' metaphor, illustrating violent radicalization through discontent and perceived adversity [15]. The model suggests that fewer people progress to the point of terrorism, leaving a small number of individuals who engage in such behaviour. Moghaddam's model suggests that individuals initially seek to alleviate adversity, but

frustration and aggression lead to a shift towards violent extremist ideology and terrorist groups. As anger grows, some sympathizers join extremist groups, eventually committing terrorist acts and ultimately overcoming barriers to action (Figure 3) [15].



Figure 2. Borum’s four-stage model of the terrorist mind-set.

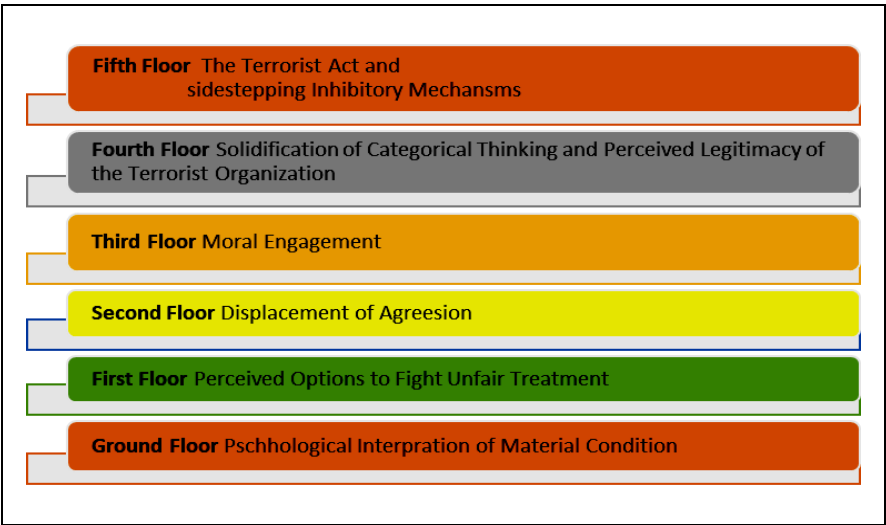


Figure 3. Moghaddam’s staircase to terrorism.

2.1.6. The New York Police Department’s (NYPD) four-stage radicalization process

As can be seen from Figure 4, the NYPD’s 2007 report identified four phases of Al Qa’ida-influenced radicalization and terrorism in the West: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadization [6, p. 12; 15]. These stages are briefly outlined below.

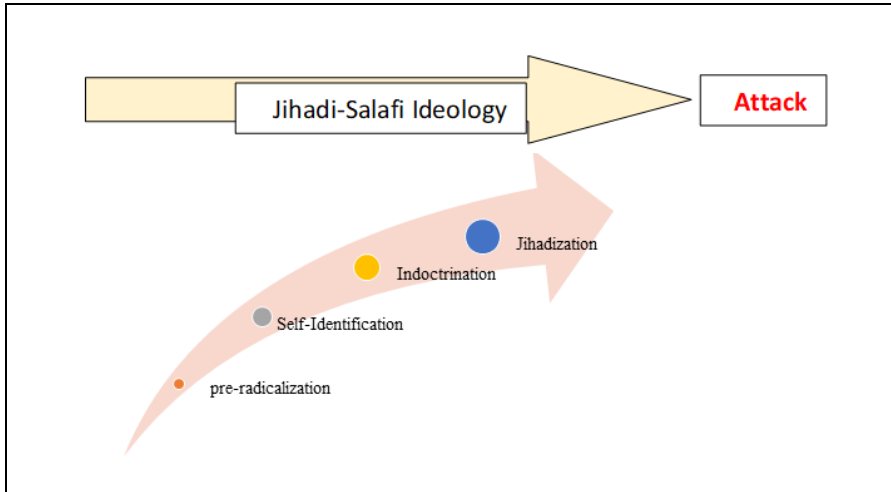


Figure 4. The NYPD's proposed four-stage radicalization process.

(1) Pre-radicalization involves an individual's life situation before exposure and adoption of Jihadi-Salafi Islam ideology. (2) Self-identification involves exploring Salafi Islam and gravitating away from their old identity, often driven by a cognitive opening. (3) Indoctrination intensifies beliefs and leads to a conviction to support militant Jihad. A spiritual sanction facilitates this phase and involves association with like-minded individuals. (4) Jihadization is the final operational phase, where members self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahedeen, leading to the group carrying out a terrorist attack [6, p. 12; 16].

2.1.7. Precht's model of a 'typical' radicalization pattern

Precht's report presents a four-phase pattern of radicalization involving pre-radicalization, conversion, identification, indoctrination and actual acts of terrorism, highlighting the role of small group dynamics in this process [17] (Figure 5).

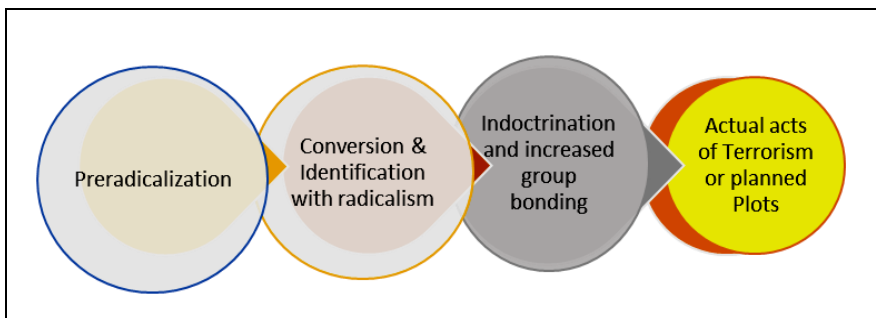


Figure 5. Precht's model of a 'typical' radicalization pattern.

Precht's report identifies three motivational factors for militant Islamist radicalization in Europe: background, trigger, and opportunity. Background factors include personal struggles with religious identity, discrimination, and a lack of social integration. Trigger factors involve people or events that provoke antipathy or activism. Opportunity factors account for exposure to extremist ideas and adherents. Precht concludes that home-grown terrorism is a sociological phenomenon influenced by belonging, identity, group dynamics and values [17].

2.1.8. Joint Military Information Support Centre (JMISC)

The USA (Military Forces), Joint Military Information Support Centre (JMISC) has developed an integrated framework for understanding radicalization, a process driven by increased preparation for and devotion to intergroup conflict and violence. The framework identifies seven interacting components: motivations, socially facilitated entry, splintering/progression, intensification, ideology, threat/defence, and belonging/identity. Motivations are driven by push and pull factors, while social facilitation is through family and kinship networks or social institutions. Splintering/progression is a gradual escalation, while intensification is driven by in-group socialization. Ideology is a narrative about something wrong or 'not right', while threat or defence is a crucial factor binding the in-group together. Belonging/identity is another element, as people may be drawn to violent extremist ideologies and groups due to a need for belonging or a sense of personal meaning. The framework aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of radicalization [14].

2.2. Socio-social explanations

Burnt argued that violent extremism theories focus on three main factors: developing antipathy towards a target group, justifying violent action, and eliminating social and psychological barriers [16]. Social scientists and law enforcement professionals are shifting away from the idea that violent extremists are all 'crazy' and identifying with a single personality type. This shift has shifted the focus of research to understanding how people develop violent extremist ideologies and engage with those who espouse them [14]. Five critical theories explain why Western Muslims become violent extremists and possibly join terrorist organizations: socio-economic deprivation, identity politics, social affiliations, political marginalization/grievances, and the presence of radical ideology these theories suggest that youth's frustration, identity crises, discrimination, hostility and cultural stains make them more susceptible to radical causes. Radicals have also been reported to penetrate mosques, seducing attendees into radical ideology and potentially violent behaviour [7]. According to the relative deprivation theory, people lacking in a fundamental aspect of society - such as money, rights, political influence, or status - are more likely to

organize or join social movements to achieve those goals. Relative deprivation has occasionally been implicated in the causes of social unrest episodes like riots, looting, terrorism, and civil conflicts. Social movements of this kind and the disorderly behaviours accompanying them are frequently the result of complaints from individuals who believe they are being denied resources to which they are legally entitled [18]. The lack of resources (such as money, rights, and social equality) required to uphold a standard of living in an economic group is referred to as relative deprivation. When income is insufficient to support a standard of living that includes access to food and shelter, absolute deprivation or poverty may be life-threatening [R. Longley, *All About Relative Deprivation and Deprivation Theory*, Thoughtco, 2023, 2-3, <https://www.thoughtco.com/relative-deprivation-theory-4177591>]. If a person harbours resentment or discontent due to their discrimination towards those in better positions, this constitutes relative deprivation. In a nutshell, relative deprivation is the perception of a difference between one's situation and that of some essential others [19]. By measuring relative deprivation, it is possible to compare the status of an individual or group with that of the rest of society objectively. However, stressing the individual's perspective makes objective measurement challenging. Relative deprivation may also emphasize the subjective experience of displeasure when being denied something to which one believes one is entitled [18, p. 7]. Sociological explanations of religious violent extremism concentrate on stress and deprivation as potential causes.

According to socio-psychological research, socioeconomic, political and cultural strains and crises can have a significant impact on people's lives and serve as major drivers of violent extremism. The literature suggests political grievances are vital factors driving radicalization in Europe, particularly about the perceived humiliation of Muslims in conflict zones. Violent extremism can also occur in incubators like mosques, work, the internet, and universities, where isolation and deprivation weaken the individual's bond to the terrorist group. Prisons and universities are ideal locations for radicals and terrorists, as they are full of vulnerable inmates who form captive audiences for recruitment. Universities can also serve as radical incubators, as they are rich in radicals and instigators who play a critical role in the origin of collective violence. For example, a 2001 survey found that 45% of local youth had taken an active role in violence, and 73% wanted to become martyrs [14].

2.3. Religion

Violent extremism and Jihadist terrorism are linked to a specific interpretation of Islam, raising questions about its authenticity and control over its adherents. It suggests a causal link between faith and attitudes.

Religion's impact on extremism is not fully understood due to influential theories and limited empirical work. However, a connection exists between radical Islam and political violence, partly explaining the predisposition to violence among some Muslims. The interpretation of Islamic texts and the

significance of critical concepts like Jihad can lead to various interpretations, influencing the fractional and heterogeneous nature of the Muslim world. Islamic doctrines can justify violence or non-violence and exercise ideological control over behaviour. However, religious devotion alone cannot account for violent radicalization, requiring a closer examination of individual psychology and group and social mechanisms [6, p. 11]. McCauley and Mosalenko classify individual mechanisms of radicalization into five: personal grievance, political grievance, slippery slope, power of love, status and throne seeking, and opening to radicalization. Lewis Rambo created the conversion theory, which focuses on how individuals change their ideologies and beliefs. It has been divided into two categories: passive converts and active converts [13]. Religious radicalization in women is a complex process influenced by socio-cultural factors and psychological traits. The Dark Tetrad of personality, which includes psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellian, and sadistic traits, predicts radicalized cognitions and behaviours in women. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to radicalization propaganda, and the role of women in international terrorism is more significant than previously thought. The factors contributing to this radicalization include perceived discrimination and religious involvement, as well as personality traits [20].

3. Method

3.1. Research tool

Al-Badayneh developed a questionnaire with relevant scales and modified and adapted as a research tool [7, 21]. The questionnaire is Arabic and covers all major theoretical dimensions of violent extremism. It was also based on ‘The Group Radicalization Assessment System (GRAS)’, which measures the degree to which individuals accept the ideology of Salafi Jihadism based on a combination of individual predispositions and group dynamics. GRAS relies on the combination of Identity Theory, Theory of Planned Behaviour, and Social Networking Analysis [20]. The questionnaire consisted of the following parts: (1) Demographic variables (i.e. age, job, education); (2) Religious scale composed of type of religion, religious observance, religious devotion, and religious compliance. The Violent Extremism Scale (VES) consisted of 44 items distributed among the following dimensions: violent extremists’ beliefs about women, education, media, jihadism, centrism, doctrine, group, Takfir, use of power, tribe, fascism, closer, and grievances. The scale reliability was strong and was estimated at 0.95 using Cronbach’s Alpha. The construct validity was assessed by calculating the correlation between the Youth Violent Extremism Scale and Low Self-Control. A significant positive relationship was found ($r = 0.69$, $\alpha = 0.000$), a sign of the scale’s validity.

3.2. Participants

A sample of 6730 young students from 15 Arab countries was selected. Of whom 47.5% were females and 52.5% were males.

4. Findings

4.1. Effects of religion predictors on youth violent extremism

Regressing religion type, religious observance, religious devotion, and religious compliance on youth violent extremism reveals multiple correlations between religious predictors and students' general radicalization (0.33). All religious predictors explained together (11%) the variance in youth violent extremism and were significant ($F = 204.133$, $\alpha = 0.00$) (Table 1). Results showed a uniquely significant contribution of religion type ($t = -21.893$, $\alpha = 0.00$), religious observance ($t = 7.232$, $\alpha = 0.00$), and religious devotion ($t = 10.088$, $\alpha = 0.00$) except religious compliance ($t = -1.566$, $\alpha = 0.00$) on youth violent extremism (Table 2).

Table 1. Regression ANOVA table for religion type, religious observance, religious devotion, and religious compliance on youth violent extremism.

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1348340.010	4	337085.003	204.133	0.000
Residual	10944831.629	6628	1651.302	-	-
Total	12293171.639	6632	-	-	-

Table 2. Regression coefficients table for religion type, religious observance, religious devotion, and impact on youth violent extremism.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
	B	SD	Beta		
Constant	105.325	2.168		48.587	0.000
Religion type	-24.561	1.122	-0.256	-21.893	0.000
Religious observance	4.238	0.586	0.092	7.232	0.000
Religious devotion	6.637	0.658	0.139	10.088	0.000
Religious compliance	-0.970	0.619	-0.021	-1.566	0.117

Findings in Table 3 - a solid, significant relationship exists between all types of radicalization and religious commitments, i.e. religious observance (except personal radicalization) and religious impact on an individual's life (except for political radicalization).

Table 3. Differences in youth violent extremism attributed to religious predictors.

Religious predictors	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Type of religion	Between groups	1023171.252	2	511585.626	301.326	0
	Within groups	11325910.776	6671	1697.783	-	-
	Total	12349082.028	6673	-	-	-
Religious observance	Between groups	526082.346	3	175360.782	98.521	0
	Within groups	11946912.819	6712	1779.933	-	-
	Total	12472995.165	6715	-	-	-
Religious devotion	Between groups	430426.945	3	143475.648	79.976	0
	Within groups	12023350.026	6702	1793.994	-	-
	Total	12453776.970	6705	-	-	-
Religious compliance	Between groups	213169.881	3	71056.627	38.892	0
	Within groups	12226493.021	6692	1827.031	-	-
	Total	12439662.903	6695	-	-	-

Figure 1 shows the mean difference in violent extremism attributed to the type of religion, religious observance, devotion, and compliance.

On the scale of violent extremism across all aspects, as shown in Figure 1, Muslims who identify as Sunnis scored highly (103.6), followed by Muslims who identify as Shiites (62.7) and Christians (60.5). (99.6) was the overall mean across all groups. Religion and violent extremism are linked. As a person's level of religious activity (no = 70, occasionally = 98.9, mostly = 98.9, yes, always = 105), except minimal compliance 99.5 is the grand mean. The religious devotion score was similarly low (very weak = 77.9, weak = 91, moderate = 96, strong = 105). The grand mean was 99.5.

Finally, the religious conformity score was similar (very weak = 100.8, weak = 96, average = 92, strong = 105). The grand mean was 99.6. The amount of violent extremism also rises, as do all religious dimensions.

4.2. Gender differences

Table 4 shows a significant difference in the violent extremism value between females and males. Surprisingly, females scored higher than males on the total violent extremism scale.

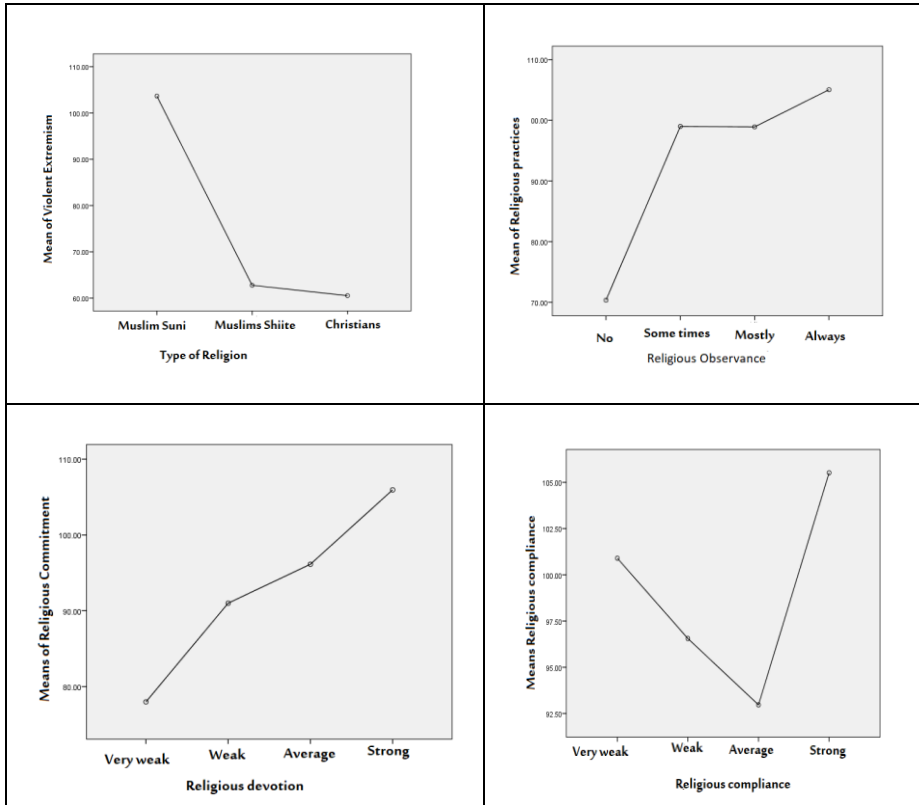


Figure 1. Comparison of violence extremism total score and each of type of religion, religious observance, religious devotion, and religious compliance.

Table 4. ANOVA analysis for the Gender difference in violent extremism.

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	30672.701	1	30672.701	16.592	.000
Residual	12260077.172	6632	1848.624	-	-
Total	12290749.874	6633	-	-	-

5. Discussion

The study examines how their religious practices and beliefs influence young Arab students' violent extremism. The findings showed that religion type, religious observance, religious dedication, and religious compliance all significantly influenced youth's beliefs about violent extremism. Violent extremism develops gradually on a personal and societal level, frequently requiring advancement through stages. Incidents such as internal and external pressures, prejudice, relative deprivation, marginalization, exclusion, and perceived grievances might speed up this process. Several theoretical explanations of violent extremism have centred on stages of accumulation. One effort to explain how complaints and vulnerabilities are transformed into hatred

toward a target group and vice versa is Borum's Four-Stage Model of the Terrorist Mind-set. It entails presenting unpleasant occurrences as unfair, blaming the victim, and demonizing the offender to encourage hostility [14]. The actor's rational choice perspectives can be overcome by faith in the group's claims and willingness to act by the group's standards. Therefore, people will purposefully employ violence on behalf of the group when the norm of the group permits the use of non-normative strategies, such as violence, to achieve their goals. Another one is by Wiktorowicz, who suggested a four-stage model of extremism that ends in violence: first, cognitive openness to new individuals or new ideas; next, personal or communal grievances (such as oppression and discrimination) experienced [22]. Second, the person engages in activism, and their openness may cause them to adopt the extreme norms of the organization (such as their preference for violence). A terrible event during this process may result in losing significance and ties to the original identity (such as that of a religious moderate). The indoctrination process run by an extreme group strengthens the adoption of extreme standards and beliefs fuelled by tragedy. Once more, the actor's violent outpouring is perceived as religious extremism's ultimate manifestation .

Except for religious compliance, the findings indicated a particularly significant contribution and impact of each form of religion, religious observance, and religious devotion. Each of these factors has an impact on its own and other factors. It can be seen in Taarnby's diagram of the radicalization process, which looks at the steps from intent to action and reveals operational aspects in the final four phases. Individual isolation and marginalization, a spiritual quest, a radicalization process, meeting and interacting with like-minded individuals, and acceptance of violence as a legitimate political tactic are all parts of the process [12, p. 21].

Each aspect of violent extremist beliefs related to religion type, religious attendance, dedication, and compliance showed significant differences. Sunni Muslims performed higher on the scale of violent extremism in all areas, then Shiite Muslims, and finally Christians. Religion and extremist violence are frequently connected. Despite exceedingly poor compliance, a person's level of belief in violent extremism increases along with their level of religious attendance, commitment, and conformity .

Additionally, Muslims who identify as Sunni performed well, followed by Shiite Muslims and Christians. It was the average value spanning all groups. Extremist violence and religion are related. Except for very little cooperation, the extent of a person's religious engagement The rating for religious fervour was also poor. Finally, the rating for religious conformity was identical. Like all religious elements, violent extremism is on the rise as well. These findings can be interoperated in the light of Schmid, who suggests that the five warning signs of religious extremism include the belief in absolute truth, support for blind obedience, a quest for utopia, the conviction that the end justifies the means, and a declaration of holy war [23]. This is true for individuals (i.e. personal beliefs) and groups (i.e. as embedded in salient group norms).

Our beliefs about violent extremism differ significantly between males and females, which brings us to our final point. Surprisingly, women outperformed men in terms of total violent extremism. How women are socialized is one theory that could account for this outcome. Being religious is necessary for a woman to project the image and perception of an honourable and decent woman. Females are expected to practice religious discipline to maintain the family's dignity, honour and reputation. Such characteristics are prerequisites for marriage. The higher scores of women in violent extremist beliefs can account for their higher scores in religious adherence and devotion than men.

6. Conclusions - implications for violent extremism de-radicalization and eradication

Violent extremism can be stopped from spreading by de-radicalizing and eliminating it through family and educational system changes. Reform is needed to improve family values like tolerance and respect for human rights. Findings highlight the need for religious education to be included as a defence against and eradicating violent extremist beliefs and actions. Both official and informal religious education can be utilized as a double-edged sword in the fight against terrorism and extremism .

On the one hand, a defensive strategy grounded in religion can be proactive and preventative against violent extremism by developing curricula that promote freedom, tolerance, human rights, and inclusiveness. In this respect, informal religious education is acceptable and unregulated by the government. In order to equip future generations with freedom, peace, human rights, and tolerance, a peaceful and altruistic zero-order belief system must be established. Religious leaders are crucial members of civic society and are vital in influencing public and political debate. It is essential to include them in initiatives to prevent violent extremism that are public. Understanding how religious elements affect violent extremism enables the development of anti-violent extremism strategies that take these aspects into account without getting entangled in theological debate. It suggests considering religious actors' contributions to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), going beyond simply countering extreme interpretations, and valuing the contributions of women, younger religious leaders, and traditionalist religious traditions [1].

The offensive strategy based on religion, on the other hand, can be used to combat and eradicate violent extremist beliefs and actions by imposing laws and societal consequences. It prevents youth from recruiting and assesses places of informal religious teaching to prevent recruitment into terrorism. Universities, jails, and groups with a religious bent can all be effective places for radicals to recruit. While de-radicalization aims to fundamentally change people's (or groups') views and attitudes, disengagement concentrates on rejecting violent means. The disaffected terrorist might not even have 'de-radicalized' or shown contrition. Law enforcement should protect the atmosphere at the university. The

Deanship of Student Affairs should implement student training on human rights and discourse.

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