



Religiosity among Bosnian Youth – Attitudes towards Islam and Practical Worshipping of It

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Abstract

Interest in individuals' religious beliefs has a long tradition in philosophy, sociology and psychology and attempts are made to understand the spiritual and physical in humans. This quantitative study investigates the religiosity of young people, primary and secondary school students, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth B&H) and their practical manifestation of religious activities. The results indicate that the Bosnian primary and high school students are not largely religious and their religiosity is not largely expressed in their practical performance of religious duties, such as praying, reading a Holy book and visiting a mosque. Moreover, the research points out that young people in B&H are quite religious when it comes to external exposure to religion and a little less when it comes to the practical implementation of religious regulations that are mandatory in Islam. Friday prayer for men is a religious obligation that is taken more seriously and performed than other daily prayers that are also obligatory. This research contributes to a clearer insight into the practical religiosity of young people in BiH and helps in understanding the priorities for improving and increasing the religiosity of young people. Also, this work can serve as a basis for other more comprehensive research in this field.

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Introduction

The notion of religiosity or religious involvement is underlined by three distinct concepts: participation in organized ritual, contact with religious-based social support networks, and spirituality, which is the subjective aspects of religious experience and feeling.¹ Religiosity or a practical dedication to the religion's worship is an important topic for religious institutions and its members since, as it is vivid in all religious communities, very often members of a certain religion are not its practitioners and they do not behave in a way their religion prescribes.² There is an increasing tendency to define oneself as religious, without this

¹ Vejo, Edina, Adilović, Muharem, and Durmić, Azemina. “Religioznost i rizična ponašanja adolescenata u urbanim sredinama Bosne i Hercegovine.” *Centar za dijalog, Vesatijja*, 2016.

² Van Cappellen, Patty, Fredrickson, Barbara, Saroglou, Vassilis, and Corneille, Olivier “Religiosity and the motivation for social affiliation.” *Personality and individual differences*, 113 (2017): 24-31.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.02.065>.

having a consequence in practical moral and ethical fields, avoiding stronger identification with religious institutions.

Researching religiosity is therefore an important sociological endeavor for all generations, especially for young people. If we take into account that young people are one of the most important carriers of any society and that their mental and spiritual state is important for the entire society, then it becomes clear to us why we should think, research and write about their spiritual state, that is, their religiosity. The religiosity of young people, especially their practical expression of religious obligations, is important for their own sake. Approaching God in any religion implies that a person is serious and aware of the facts and laws that are beyond the visible, which are in the sphere of metaphysics, and if a person, especially a young person, has the habit of turning away from the physical and visible and looking for something more than that, then it is an additional indicator of the seriousness of that person.

Furthermore, the question of the practical religiosity of young people in every society, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is important because young people at this age are still exposed to theoretical religiosity through schools and classes on religion, so research into practical religiosity is a good indicator of how much theory influences young people and how much of theories are accepted in real life. Every serious society that thinks about its youth should regularly monitor and investigate the spiritual state of this sensitive and psychologically and spiritually vulnerable category of society. Therefore, researching the religiosity of young people is an important undertaking, the benefits of which are manifold.

The main aim of this research is to investigate the religious practices of the young Bosnian population. Moreover, the goal is to examine the role of religion and religious duties in the everyday life of Bosnian youth, so that on this basis the role of religion and religious ceremonies in the entire Bosnian society can be examined. Similar research has been done in the countries of the region, Croatia and Serbia, but little or no literature can be found on this topic by Bosnian authors. Thus, it can be considered the first of such kind here. Therefore, the literature consulted for this research is mainly in English from research conducted mainly in the United States. This work and the research that has been done can be an additional contribution to those who would deal with this topic in the future, both as a source and as an incentive to expand this important but underrepresented topic.

Literature review

Religion and religiosity

Religion represents a system of beliefs and rituals by which a person tries to enter into a relationship with God and achieve salvation.³ Definitions of the concepts of religion and religiosity intertwine and stand in such a relationship in which religion represents a socio-cultural and religiosity an individual-experiential aspect.⁴ For some authors, religiosity is orthodoxy and belief⁵ and for others, it resembles devotion, holiness, piousness, church membership, church attendance, belief acceptance, doctrinal knowledge, and living the faith.⁶

Religiosity and youth

Adolescence is categorized as a critical period of cognitive and behavioral human development. Among other cognitive processes, it is during this period that an individual develops the capacity to understand religion - its beliefs, values, and practices,⁷ which can lead to religious participation.⁸ Research that considers the religiosity of young people is often associated with the family and the acquisition of religiosity in the family circle, or with the influence of religiosity on youth behavior. In general, there exists strong support for the relationship between religiosity and positive youth social behaviors as well as avoidance of negative social behaviors. For example, higher perceptions of the importance of religion protect antisocial behaviors such as substance use and abuse,⁹ truancy and sexual activity, and other similar problems.¹⁰ Risk behaviors such as smoking, alcohol use, drug use, sexual activity, delinquency, and harming others are also prevented by religious organizational activities.

The religiosity of young people has been researched in the surrounding countries and B&H. Several papers and dissertations on this topic can be found in Croatia and Serbia and some studies take into account the Balkans as a whole.¹¹ For example, Mandarić in her surveys,

³ Anić, Vladimir. *Rječnik hrvatskog jezika*, Novi Liber, Zagreb, 1991.

⁴ Marinović Bobinac, Ankica. "Necrkvena religioznost u Hrvatskoj." *Institut za društvena Istraživanja u Zagrebu*, ½, no. 147/148, (1995): 853.-866.

⁵ Groome, Thomas. *Educating for life*. Allen, TX: Thomas Moore Press, 1998.

⁶ Cardwell, Jerry. *The social context of religiosity*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980.

⁷ Elkind, David. "The origins of religion in the child." *Review of religious research*, 12, no.1 (1970): 35-42. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3510932>.

⁸ Regnerus, Mark and Uecker, Jeremy. "Finding faith, losing faith: the prevalence and context of religious transformations during adolescence." *Review of religious research*, 1, (2006): 217-37.

⁹ Wagener, Linda Mans, Furrow James, King Pamela Ebstyn, Leffert Nancy, and Benson Peter. "Religious involvement and developmental resources in youth." *Review of Religious Research*, 44, no. 3, (2003): 271-284.

¹⁰ Sinha, Jill, Cnaan Ram, and Gelles Richard. "Adolescent risk behaviors and religion: Findings from a national study." *Journal of Adolescence*, 30, no. 2, (2007): 231-249.

¹¹ Marinić, Marko. "Religioznost i zadovoljstvo životom - Analiza povezanosti nekih obilježja religioznosti s razinom osobnog blagostanja i sreće kod zagrebačkih studenata." *Religije i sreća, Zagreb: Filozofsko-*

conducted in Zagreb, Croatia, among high school students, states that 90% of them are considered religious. The results of the CCE (Center for Civic Education in Montenegro) survey (conducted on a sample of 711 respondents between the ages of 14 and 29) show that the more educated a young person is, the less important religion is in their life, that young people from rural areas are somewhat more pious than their urban peers as well as that the young of pious parents are more pious than others. Research has also shown that the more authoritarian young people are, the more pious they are. Authoritarianism is measured by the degree to which they believe that society needs a strong leader, with a firm hand.

The foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung¹² published a Study on Youth in B&H. In this survey, 95.6 percent of respondents identified themselves as members of a religion. Most respondents said they belonged to the Islamic religion (55.8 %), followed by the Orthodox (27.3 %) and the Catholic (12.5 %). 1.8 percent said atheists and non-believers, and 2.6 percent were unanswered. In connection with religious practice, it was also examined whether young people practice some religious rites, through going to church for religious service, the frequency of prayer, celebrating religious holidays and going on pilgrimages. One-third of young people (33 %) go to religious service regularly or often in worship, but more than half of them do so sometimes (56.3 %).

Religion in public schools and religious education

Education is crucial to the development of a tolerant society. The education system in many countries has evolved from being secular to one that promotes pluralism, and understanding that people will have different conceptions of the good and understanding of the best way to live life morally. Religious education intends to contribute to students' knowledge and understanding of, as well as to develop their sensitivity to different religions.¹³ Religious education has been traditionally categorized into (1) *confessional religious education*, which aims to lead to obligation towards a specific religion, such as Islam or Catholicism,¹⁴ and (2) *non-confessional religious education*, which intends to provide information about religion/s for

teološki institut Družbe Isusove u Zagrebu, (2014): 227-241. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/645338>; Mandarić, Valentina Blaženka. *Religiozni identitet zagrebačkih adolescenata*. Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar – Katolički bogoslovni fakultet, Zagreb, (2000): 23-25. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/994752>; Klarin, Mira and Krasicki, Arkadiusz. "Religioznost i neke dimenzije psihološke dobrobiti kod mladih." *Nova prisutnost*, 18, no. 2 (2020): 29-242. <https://doi.org/10.31192/np.18.2.1>.

¹² Lejla Turčilo, Amer Osmić, Damir Kapidžić, Sanela Šadić, Jusuf Žiga, Anida Dudić, *Youth Study in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Sarajevo: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019). <https://www.fes-bosnia-and-herzegovina.org/>.

¹³ Schreiner, Peter. Towards a European oriented religious education. Towards religious competence: Diversity as a challenge for education in Europe. *Munster: Lit Verlag*, (2001): 253-67.

¹⁴ Garrone, Gabriel Marie. *The Catholic School*. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977. (<https://www.aquinascollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/Study-and-Discussion-Guide-The-Catholic-School.pdf>)

students to expand their knowledge and understanding on the different worldviews and possibly result in the promotion of tolerance for other religions.¹⁵

Throughout the years, and even centuries, because the origins of Bosnian Islamic education date back to the Ottoman empire, the concept of Islamic education has passed through continual development. When talking about religious education in post-war Bosnia it is important to mention that, according to the 2004 Law on religious communities¹⁶, each person has a right to religious education, at state-run schools and privately, respectively, and the teachers are appointed by the religious authorities.

Regarding public primary and high schools, the subject of Religion or History of religion is not a mandatory subject. Since the Bosnian educational system is divided according to three main political divisions between Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, thus a religion in schools is also categorized as follows: Islamic religious lessons for Muslims (Bosniaks), Catholic Christianity for Croats and Orthodox Christianity for Serbs. Thus, students or their parents have a choice to attend the weekly given lessons on religion or abstain from it. With the introduction of religious education in schools, religious institutions directly participate in the socialization of young people and the creation of their value system. The goal is to provide as much information as possible about the religion to which an individual belongs through religious education.

Methodology

Aim of the research

This research aimed to determine do Bosnian primary and high school students obtain Islamic religious practices, such as praying or reading the Holy Qur'an, in their daily lives. Based on the defined aim, the following research questions guided the study:

RQ1. What are the Bosnian youth's general attitudes toward religion? To what extent are they exposed to religion considering the characteristics of their gender, class level, and their place of residency?

RQ2. To what extent do Bosnian youth read the Holy Qur'an and how often do they pray and how frequently do they visit a mosque considering the characteristics of their gender, class level, and their place of residency? Is there a significant correlation between practicing these three religious' duties?

¹⁵ Bråten, Oddrun. *A comparative study of religious education in state schools in England and Norway*. PhD diss., (University of Warwick, 2009).

¹⁶ Official Gazette of BiH, no. 5/04.

RQ3. Does the frequency of Friday praying differ from praying other daily prayers based on the participants' school type and class level?

Based on the posed research questions, the following research hypotheses will be tested:

H1. Bosnian youth will report positive attitudes toward the religion and will report a frequent exposure to religion regardless of their gender, class level, and their place of residency.

H2. It will be found that Bosnian youth often read a Holy Qur'an and that they frequently pray and quite often visit a mosque regardless of their gender, class level, and their place of residency. There will be a statistically significant correlation between practicing these three religious' duties.

H3. There is a difference in the frequency of praying between Friday prayer (Jumu'a) and other daily prayings based on the participants' school type and class level.

Participants

The sample consists of 279 participants: 206 high school students from all four grades and 75 primary school students from the last two study years (eighth and ninth). The participants were 116 males (41.6 %) and 163 females (58.4%). In the first grade of high school, there were 57 students (20.4%) in the second 55 (19.7%), in the third 26 (9.3%) and 66 (23.7%) in the fourth grade. In the eighth grade of primary school there were 32 students (11.5%) and in the ninth 43 students (15.4%). The sample was taken from 5 B&H cities.

Instrument

For this research, a questionnaire was employed. The questionnaire consists of 31 statements. The first part of the questionnaire consists of demographic-related questions for the participants' school, the city where they go to school, gender and class level they attend. The second part of the questionnaire contains the questions related to different parts of a religiosity grouped into subscales. The core of the questionnaire was taken from Nguyen et al. (2013) It contained questions on the participants' general attitude towards religiosity (5 statements), exposure to the Islamic religion (5 statements), frequency of praying (a response ranging from *5 times a day* to *not at all*), reading the Holy Qur'an (with responses ranging from *every day* to *never*), visiting a mosque (with responses ranging from *once in a week or more* to *never*), and a life satisfaction subscale (4 statements with a 5-point Likert scale response options ranging from *completely agree* to *completely disagree*). The questionnaire was translated

into the Bosnian language and was delivered to students so that its administration to the Bosnian students at different levels of language proficiency would be easier.

Data analysis

After the data were collected, it was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v. 26). Frequencies and means were computed to ascertain the level of the participants' exposure to religion, religious activities and self-reported religiosity. Firstly, descriptive analysis including mean, standard deviation (SD) and frequencies was employed. An independent samples t-test and a one-way ANOVA were used to show the differences between the participants' characteristics. A Pearson-product correlation test was computed to check the possible correlation between certain subscales of the instrument.

Results

In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the degree of personal religiosity, ranking on a scale between *not at all religious* and *completely religious*. Furthermore, they were asked about the religiosity in their family, the attitude toward the religiosity of young people and whether religious people feel better. Overall, the issues of religiosity were rated quite high ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .67$), which indicates the high importance of religiosity among respondents. Specifically, the participants agree that the young should be more religious, and that religion has an important position in their family, and that they are on average religious ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .55$). Looking into a descriptive analysis of the self-reported religiosity between genders, schools, and cities the participants come from, there can be noticed that the mean scores for males and females are almost identical. High school students reported a bit higher mean score ($M = 3.75$, $SD = .62$) than primary school students ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .71$), while the participants from the city of Visoko reported significantly higher mean score ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .40$) than other three cities whose scores were quite close to each other.

Furthermore, the first part of the questionnaire also examined the participants' external exposure to religion. They were asked to rate the level of exposure to audio-visual religious content on tv and radio (watching, reading, and listening about the religion), whether they attend religion lessons in schools and whether they spend time with peers who share their beliefs. The answer range was between 1 which holds the answer *no* and 2 for *yes*. The overall mean score for the questions on exposure to religion was $M = 1.33$, $SD = .27$, which does not confirm a strong exposure to religion. It rather shows a low degree of exposure. Specifically, the participants reported that they are exposed to watching religious TV shows,

M = 1.52, and listening to religious songs M = 1.50 but the majority of them do not attend religious lessons in their school M = 1.06.

The second part of the present research is based on the initial analysis of the participants' exposure to religious practices, praying daily and Friday praying, reading a Holy Qur'an and visiting mosques. The research intended to explore how frequently Bosnian high school students read the Holy Qur'an, how often they pray and how frequently they visit a mosque. For a more complex and clearer analysis of the stated objectives, an analysis of possible differences between males and females, type of school and class level will be included.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of practical exposure to religion based on place of residency and grade.

	City				Class level					
	Visoko	Maglaj	Tešanj	Kakanj	1	2	3	4	8	9
Praying	4.87	2.48	3.01	2.89	4.07	3.78	3.40	3.03	2.59	2.44
Visiting mosque	4.65	3.04	3.25	2.72	4.02	3.56	3.19	2.79	3.19	3.19
Reading Qur'an	3.35	1.87	2.16	2.12	3.09	2.47	2.58	1.94	2.06	1.98

A descriptive analysis of practical exposure to the religion of the students from four different Bosnian cities shows that the students from Visoko reported the highest mean for all three variables (daily prayings, frequency of visiting mosques and reading a Holy Book). Moreover, the lowest mean score by all schools was reported for the variable *reading Qur'an* which indicates that this is the weakest practicing religious activity, but still there is a significant difference between students from Visoko (M = 3.35) whose reported mean score indicates that they read a Holly Book weekly and students from Maglaj (M = 1.87) whose mean score indicates that they read it less frequently, approximately monthly.

When it comes to a descriptive analysis of practical exposure to the religion of the students from different class levels, the results indicate that the first-class high school students reported the highest mean score for all three variables; praying (M = 4.07), visiting a mosque (M = 4.02) and reading a Holy Qur'an (M = 3.09). This indicates that these students pray daily, visit a mosque frequently weekly and read a Holly Book almost every day. As for the praying, there is a decreasing tendency in the frequency of praying from the first class' level (M = 4.07) to the fourth-class level (M = 3.03) of a high school, which indicates that high school students pray less as they get older and move to the higher-class levels. When it comes to reading the Holy Qur'an, the mean score for the first class of high school is again the highest (M = 3.09) and it decreases in the older classes. The mean scores for the eighth and ninth classes of a primary

school are almost identical. A detailed descriptive analysis of the frequency of praying, visiting mosques and reading the Holy Book is presented in Table 1 above.

To investigate whether a statistically significant difference exists between above mentioned dependent variables of practical religious activities and genders as an independent variable, a t-test was run. The results indicate that there exists a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$ level between males ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.16$) and females ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.34$) for visiting a mosque, while for praying and reading a Holy Qur'an there is a statistically insignificant difference at $p < .05$ level between them. Specifically, the results suggest that visiting a mosque as a practical religious activity is paid more attention by males than by females as males more frequently obtain it, which may be as such due to specific reasons. Contrary to this activity which supposes an effort, leaving home and going to a mosque, two other religious activities, praying and reading a Holy Book are reported insignificantly different in terms of practice by males and females. Both males ($M = 3.43$) and females ($M = 3.18$) pray quite frequently, almost daily and read Qur'an monthly. Table 2 below presents ANOVA results.

Table 2. T-test results based on gender differences in religious practices

	Males		Females		<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Praying	3.43	1.60	3.18	1.63	.197	1.29
Visiting mosque	3.77	1.16	3.03	1.34	.014	.85
Reading Qur'an	2.32	1.15	2.39	1.06	.184	1.33

Furthermore, to examine if the three dependent variables of practical religious activities correlate, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. The results showed that there exists a positive correlation between praying and visiting a mosque, $r = 0.624$, and between praying and reading Qur'an, $r = 0.658$. Also, a positive correlation between visiting mosques and reading Qur'an, $r = 0.639$, is found. Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the three dependent variables of practical religious activities. Increases in one practical activity correlate with another two activities (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations between variables of practical exposure to religion

	Praying	Visiting mosque	Reading Qur'an
Praying	1	.624	.658
Visiting mosque	.624	1	.639

Reading Qur'an	.658	.639	1
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One of the issues of practical manifestation of religious regulations for male participants was the issue of performing Friday prayers (Jumu'a). Namely, male respondents were asked how often they perform prayer on Fridays, always, sometimes, or never. In another Friday prayer question, respondents, both male and female, were asked how often their male family members performed this prayer, also on a scale of always, sometimes, or never. As for the first question of Friday praying the results of the analysis of primary and high school students revealed that high school students (M = 2.58) perform Friday praying more frequently than primary school students (M = 2.02). When the class level differences are taken into account there is a tendency of all four high school students to have approximately similar mean scores which indicates that they perform Friday praying almost always. The eighth and ninth classes of primary school do not differ significantly and reported a mean score close to 2 which indicates that they perform Friday praying from time to time.

When it comes to practicing the Friday prayer by the participants' family members, the mean scores indicate that the high school participants' family members perform the Friday prayer a bit more frequently than do the primary school participants' family members. Furthermore, class level mean scores showed insignificant differences regarding this issue. The only difference is reported by the first and the second-class level's higher mean scores compared with other classes. Overall, the mean scores indicate that the participants' family members do not always perform the Friday prayer but that it is rather occasionally. A detailed descriptive representation of mean scores regarding these two questions is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of practicing Friday (Jumu'a) praying based on school type and class level

	<i>School</i>		<i>Class level</i>						
	Primary	High	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Friday praying	2.02	2.58	2.65	2.70	2.63	2.40	1.94	2.12	
Family members' Friday praying	2.28	2.50	2.68	2.67	2.31	2.26	2.22	2.33	

Furthermore, although the awareness of performing Friday prayers is more pronounced than the awareness of performing other daily prayers among Bosnian Muslims, the aim was to

check whether there is a statistically significant difference between these two types of prayer. A paired samples t-test was obtained to analyze the mentioned question. The results, as presented in Table 5 below, indicate that there exists a statistically significant difference at $p = .000$ between practicing daily praying ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.63$) and practicing the Friday praying ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .73$). What is interesting in the analysis of these two activities is that there exists a moderate correlation $r = .642$ between them, which indicates that increasing the activity of one variable increases the activity of another.

Table 5. T-test and correlation between practicing Friday (Jumua) praying and other prayers

	M	D	r	p	df
Praying	3.27	1.63	.642	.000	130
Friday praying	2.40	.73			

Discussion

Based on the results, Bosnian youth is not pretty much religious when their self-regulated religiosity is taken into account and not that much religious when their exposure to religion is taken into account. The majority of them, 64.2% reported that they feel average religious, 29.4% feel very religious and only 6.5% feel that they are not religious at all. This report was for this sample unexpected since the places where the survey was taken are generally known as religious and dedicated to Islam more than some others. Compared with Croatia, for example, this level of religiosity is again small since Mandarić¹⁷ in her surveys, conducted in Zagreb, Croatia, among high school students, states that 90% of them are considered religious. Klarin & Krasicki,¹⁸ who also did their research in Croatia, conclude that almost two-thirds of young people in the survey consider religion to be very important in their lives.

Of the many correlates of religiosity, gender and age stand out in particular. Regarding gender differences in terms of religiosity and exposure to religion, respondents showed almost no differences. Both showed an enviable but not so high degree of religiosity and exposure to religion. The difference between them could be expected for several reasons and one of them is

¹⁷ Mandarić, Valentina Blaženka. *Religiozni identitet zagrebačkih adolescenata*. (Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar ; Katolički bogoslovni fakultet, 2000), 23-25.

¹⁸ Klarin, Mira and Krasicki, Arkadiusz. "Religioznost i neke dimenzije psihološke dobrobiti kod mladih." *Nova prisutnost*, 18, no. 2 (2020): 29-242. <https://doi.org/10.31192/np.18.2.1>.

that men have more opportunities to attend religious ceremonies, especially Friday prayers which women do not attend, which is why they have more opportunities to hear about religion. Also, it is easier for men, especially young people, to perform prayers, especially in the mosque because the regulations for men are simpler. Women should be dressed specially, and have special clothes that cover almost the whole body and it is harder for them to perform ablution in such conditions. Because of this difficult or reduced access to religious activities, it would be understandable that boys and girls differ on this issue, but this is not the case in this study.

Since Vejo et al.¹⁹ have proved that the more a young person experiences a religious experience and connection with God, the more he/she practices religiosity and the more he/she feels spirituality, in the following lines the connection between religiosity and religious practices will be discussed.

When it comes to the practical manifestation of religious rites, respondents were asked how often they perform prayers, visit the mosque and read the Qur'an. The results showed that between these three activities, Bosnian students as a whole read the Qur'an the least, weekly or even monthly, and that they mostly pray and visit the mosque.

However, when these activities are considered individually, differences are noticed both between the cities in which students attend schools and between classes in schools. For example, first-graders perform the most prayers according to the results obtained. This phenomenon is very interesting when we compare it with other classes. Namely, the students in the final grades of primary school showed that they rarely perform prayers and only one-year-older students, those who started high school, perform prayers the most. A possible explanation may be that students entering high school have experienced some kind of positive change in awareness of religion and are already emerging from the early stages of puberty where students graduating from primary school view religion as something that is not for them and that is not in fashion. However, the opposite is the fact that Bosnian students attend religious instruction in the mosque (*mekteb*) until the end of primary school, and thus these results are somewhat strange and unexpected. It was to be expected that eighth and ninth-grade primary school students perform more prayers than high school students since they go to the mosque for religious instruction on weekends and are therefore more exposed to religion, however, this is not the case in this study.

¹⁹ Vejo, Edina, Adilović, Muharem, and Durmić, Azemina. "Religioznost i rizična ponašanja adolescenata u urbanim sredinama Bosne i Hercegovine." in *Centar za dijalog, Vesatijja*, (Sarajevo: Centar Za Dijalog-Vesatijja, 2016).

Another characteristic of the obtained results is that the high frequency of prayers in the first grade of high school decreases in the older grades, which is in line with Lippman and McIntosh's study²⁰ of American high school students. Thus, it is concluded that with the transition to the older grade the frequency of prayers decreases and fourth graders perform the least prayers. We can look for the reason for this again in society and in what we call the imposition of the opinion that young people should be free, not tied to the obligations and terms of something that they do not need now, while they are young. In addition, many things are available to young people in high school that take them away from spiritual, deeper thinking about God, religion, moral values and the like. A great difficulty for potential religious practitioners, especially those who would like to perform prayers, is the schedule of classes that do not take into account even the Friday prayers for men, let alone other prayers, and the fact that Bosnian schools do not have space for ablution and prayers. In this way, both those who would like to perform prayers and those who normally perform them at home are prevented from doing so.

The closest comparison with this research can be made with the research on religiosity among young people in neighboring Croatia, where the authors examined almost identical indicators of religiosity such as this research. Given that Croatia, like Bosnia, emerged from communist atheism to democratic religion after the 1990s, this research serves as a reliable equivalent for comparison and analysis. The study of the religiosity of Croatian youth obtained by Leutar & Josipović²¹ reports that, when it comes to prayer, respondents occasionally pray in 26% of cases, and often as regularly in 37% of cases. When it comes to reading the Bible, Leutar & Josipović continue that very rarely, 50% of respondents read the Bible, 20.5% several times a month, 15.4% several times a week, and 14% of young people do not read the Bible at all. Moreover, 44% of the Croatian youth stated that they do not read religious papers at all, and occasionally read a religious newspaper of the same number. One or more religious newspapers are regularly followed by 12% of respondents. Taken in detail, 28.3% of the present study's participants read Qur'an every day, 28% read it weekly, 23.3% monthly and 20.4% do not read Qur'an at all, which on average means that a quarter of students do not read the Qur'an at all.

Compared with the above-mentioned research on Croatian youth's religiosity where 55.3% of respondents talk to friends and acquaintances regularly or often about religious

²⁰ Lippman, Laura and McIntosh, Hugh. "The demographics of spirituality and religiosity among youth: International and U.S. patterns." *Child Trends Research Briefs*, 2010. <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Spirituality-and-Religiosity-Among-Youth.pdf>.

²¹ Leutar, Zdravka and Josipović, Ana Marija. "Neke Dimenzije Religioznosti Mladih." *Nova prisutnost* 7, no. 3, (2008): 373-395.

content, 3.1% of them very rarely, and 1.7% never talk about it, 77.1% of the present research's participants reported that they spend time with the peers who share their religious beliefs and 22.9% of them do not. The obtained results are in line with Van Cappellen et al.²² who state that religious people are not willing to affiliate with those who disagree with basic aspects of their religion even though they have a generally affiliative nature.

Furthermore, the current research also deals with the issue of performing Friday prayers for men. As mentioned, prayers on Fridays have established stronger importance and habit among men, which can be seen when visiting mosques throughout Bosnia. As expected, the students answered this question (based on the offered answers to never perform, to perform sometimes and to perform always) that they perform this prayer somewhere between sometimes and always, which means that they do not have the habit of performing it every Friday, but also to be aware of this prayer and not neglect it. The reason for this can be found again in the fact that they are in school at that time, that some schools may not have the habit of letting male students miss classes and attend this prayer, or that some students may not even bother to ask permission even though they might be allowed. Comparing this with the general answer for performing other prayers for boys (they stated that they perform prayers occasionally), we conclude that prayers on Fridays are still more important for them than the regularity of performing other prayers. It should also be emphasized that, when it comes to performing Jumu'ah prayers, high school students showed a higher frequency of performing than the final grades of primary school.

Based on the obtained data, it can be concluded that a large number of young people believe in the existence of God and consider themselves religious, but when it comes to practicing religiosity, they are represented in a much smaller number. So, they look positively at religiosity and evaluate themselves as religious, but when the proof is required in practice, their religiosity takes on smaller dimensions.

Conclusion

The religiosity of young people is a topic being researched about more and more. Numerous studies conducted on this topic try to provide data that would show how religious young people are and what influences religiosity has on young people. This paper aimed to examine the religiosity of young people. The following conclusions can be drawn from the research:

²² Van Cappellen, Patty, Fredrickson, Barbara, Saroglou, Vassilis, and Corneille, Olivier "Religiosity and the motivation for social affiliation." *Personality and individual differences*, 113 (2017): 24-31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.02.065>.

First, young people in B&H are quite religious when it comes to external exposure to religion and a little less when it comes to the practical implementation of religious regulations that are mandatory in Islam. Moreover, differences in the implementation of practical religious obligations are noticeable between individual places where respondents live, between school classes, and between their gender. Also, there is a positive correlation between performing daily prayers, visiting the mosque and reading the Qur'an;

Second, Friday prayer for men is a religious obligation that is taken more seriously and performed than other daily prayers that are also obligatory. Moreover, a positive correlation was shown between praying on Fridays and performing other daily prayers. It is also concluded that praying on Fridays would be significantly more pronounced if male students were systematically organized to go to Jumu'ah, prayer i.e., that school classes are postponed during Jumu'ah.

The present study, however, is not without certain limitations. It is based on only one religion and a few cities, which makes it limited for consideration in other parts of the country or other religions. Also, the study did not include respondents of a various age group and different layers of society, which may also represent certain limitations. It is, thus, recommended to compare these results with other places in B&H and with students from other religions, such as Catholic and Orthodox churches. Also, an interesting comparison could be found by the picture of religiosity among college students or, for example, a comparison of married people. All these indicators would contribute more to the study of religiosity of young people in B&H.

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