

THE REFLECTIONS OF INTERFAMILY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS CONFLICTS ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

*AS REFLEXÕES DOS CONFLITOS DE CRENÇAS RELIGIOSAS
INTERFAMILIARES SOBRE OS RELACIONAMENTOS
AMOROSOS: UM ESTUDO SOCIOLÓGICO E PSICOLÓGICO*

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norms, cultural values and family pressures. The study is based on systematic examination of the relevant literature as a method. Research in the field of psychology may cause religious incompatibilities in individuals may cause anxiety, identity complexity and attachment problems; The sociology literature reveals that these differences affect not only individuals but also the family institution and social structure. The findings point to the points in which the literature is common: Religious belief differences lead to damage to conflict, communication problems and a sense of belonging in romantic relationships. However, some research also shows that if couples develop flexible religious attitudes, relationships can be more harmonious. As a result, religious belief differences affect not only individual psychological experiences but also social adaptation processes in modern societies. For this reason, it is important to evaluate the sociological and psychological dimensions of religious belief differences together in understanding the dynamics of domestic and romantic relationships.

Keywords: Religious Faith. Family Conflict. Romantic Relations. Sociology. Psychology.

Resumo

Este artigo examina as reflexões das diferenças de crenças religiosas entre famílias sobre os relacionamentos amorosos sob uma perspectiva sociológica e psicológica. A literatura mostra que a crença religiosa desempenha um papel central no sistema de valores dos indivíduos e que as expectativas baseadas na fé entre famílias são frequentemente decisivas na escolha do parceiro. Especialmente em famílias com diferentes origens religiosas ou sectárias, os relacionamentos amorosos dos casais são moldados por normas sociais, valores culturais e pressões familiares. O estudo adota como método a análise sistemática da literatura relevante. Pesquisas no campo da psicologia indicam que incompatibilidades religiosas podem gerar ansiedade, complexidade de identidade e problemas de apego nos indivíduos; já a literatura sociológica revela que essas diferenças afetam não apenas os indivíduos, mas também a instituição familiar e a estrutura social. Os achados apontam para convergências na literatura: as diferenças de crença religiosa acarretam conflitos, problemas de comunicação e fragilidade no sentimento de pertencimento nos relacionamentos amorosos. No entanto, algumas pesquisas também demonstram que, quando os casais desenvolvem atitudes religiosas mais flexíveis, os relacionamentos podem ser mais harmoniosos. Em síntese, as diferenças de crenças religiosas afetam não apenas as experiências psicológicas individuais, mas também os processos de adaptação social nas sociedades modernas. Por essa razão, é fundamental avaliar conjuntamente as dimensões sociológicas e psicológicas das diferenças de crença religiosa para compreender a dinâmica das relações domésticas e amorosas.

Palavras-chave: Crença Religiosa. Conflito Familiar. Relacionamentos Amorosos. Sociologia. Psicologia.

Introduction

Romantic relations play an important role in the development of identity, psychological goodness and social adaptation processes of individuals. These relationships contain not only the emotional ties between individuals, but also the effects of families, culture and social values. In particular, religious belief differences between families stand out as a decisive factor in the choice of partner and in the sustainability of the relationship. Religious belief has a central position in the system of values of individuals and therefore shapes both individual behaviors and expectations of families directly (Markova & Sandal, 2021). In recent years, research shows that families with different religious or sectarian pasts are significantly effective on the partner preferences of young adults and that this effect can create conflict in romantic relationships (Vasilenko et al., 2020). The approval processes of families can be an element of pressure on the continuity of the relationship, especially in traditional societies. This may lead to communication problems between couples, damage to trust and uncertainties in plans for the future. From a psychological point of view, religious belief differences may cause weakening of a sense of belonging in individuals, the complexity of identity and an increase in anxiety. The fact that couples have different religious values may adversely affect the relationship satisfaction by increasing compliance problems. However, some studies show that the adaptation process is progressing healthier if couples develop flexible religious attitudes (Mahoney & Boyatzis, 2022). From a sociological point of view, religious heterogeneity not only affects inter-individual conflicts, but also the relations between families and social adaptation processes. In this context, the conflicts of religious beliefs between families are reflected not only on individual psychology in modern societies, but also to social structure and social integration. Therefore, examining how differences between religious beliefs between families constitute a field of conflict in romantic relations have significant consequences both at the individual and social level. The aim of this study is to reveal the reflections of religious belief differences to romantic relations from a sociological and psychological perspective and to evaluate the current trends in the literature.

Materials and methods

This study was carried out based on literature screening in order to examine the reflections of religious belief differences between families on romantic relations and only academic studies published in the last five years were taken into consideration. In the study, no empirical data were collected, but rather the current national and international academic literature was systematically evaluated. During the literature screening process, as well as international academic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Jstor, Google Scholar and Proquest, national studies that can be accessed through TR array and Dergipark were also included. The keywords used within the scope of the research are determined in Turkish and English, such as “religious belief”, “family conflict”, “romantic relations”, “sociology” and “psychology” and “Religious Belief”, “Family Conflict”, “Romantic Relationships”, “Sociology” and “Psychology”. The study included articles, academic books, book chapters and reliable reports in refereed journals published between 2020 and 2024; Popular magazine articles, blog contents, personal opinion articles and internet sources that do not have scientific quality are excluded. The current studies have been examined with the thematic analysis approach, firstly from the sociological perspective, the researches discussing the effects of religious belief differences between families on social structures and family dynamics were classified, and then the findings examining the psychological consequences of these differences in the fields of psychology in the fields of individuals and couples were compiled. This analysis process enabled the evaluation of the conflict areas created by religious differences in relationships, as well as psychological reflections such as identity complexity, belonging problems and anxiety experienced by individuals, as well as the multidimensional evaluation of social norms and cultural expectations on relationships. In terms of the reliability of the study, the use of primary resources was taken directly, and the data obtained from different disciplines are brought together from a comparative perspective and a holistic analysis frame based on both sociological and psychological literature was put forward.

Findings

The literature indicates that one of the most frequent sources of conflict in romantic relationships involving interfamily religious differences is family approval and the resulting social pressures. In traditional societies, parents and extended family members often play a decisive role in their children's partner selection. Especially in relationships where individuals come from different religious or denominational backgrounds, family approval is often conditional, which creates intense social pressure on couples. Research shows that when families perceive religious differences as "incompatibility," they introduce various obstacles to the sustainability of the relationship. These obstacles may appear in the form of outright disapproval, or indirectly through psychological pressure on the couple, questioning their future plans, or weakening family bonds.

Studies conducted over the last five years emphasize that families' faith-based expectations significantly shape couples' decision-making processes in romantic relationships. Particularly for young adults, the pressure from families regarding "cultural compatibility" or "religious suitability" generates anxiety in partner selection and limits individuals' autonomy in romantic relationships (Markova & Sandal, 2021). This situation undermines not only personal happiness but also the sense of trust within the relationship. One partner may approach the relationship with distance due to fear of losing family approval, while the other experiences frustration over the unfairness of the situation. From a sociological perspective, family approval can be considered a kind of "tool of social legitimacy" in romantic relationships. Relationships disapproved of by families also face risks of criticism and exclusion in the broader community, leading couples to develop defensive behaviors or social withdrawal. Psychologically, such pressures may cause stress, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and problems with commitment. However, some studies show that when couples develop mutual solidarity and strong communication in the face of family pressure, they may experience this process as a kind of "test of togetherness," strengthening their relationships. In conclusion, family approval and social pressures constitute one of the most pronounced dimensions through which religious differences manifest in romantic relationships. This situation directly affects not only individuals' psychological well-being but also their social belonging and family ties. Current literature shows that such pressures operate more strongly in traditional settings, while functioning more flexibly in more secular social contexts.

One of the most critical factors in managing religious differences in romantic relationships is couples' communication styles and their capacity for compromise

in religious practices. Individuals from different religious backgrounds may have varying expectations in daily routines, religious rituals, or during holidays and special occasions. While such differences carry potential for conflict, they also open opportunities for mutual understanding and problem-solving through negotiation. Open and empathic communication helps couples prevent the escalation of issues arising from religious differences, thereby increasing relationship sustainability. Recent research highlights that flexibility and mutual tolerance in religious practices provide an important foundation for harmony in relationships. For instance, when one partner shows respect toward the other's rituals, conflict within the shared living space decreases, and mutual trust is reinforced (Mahoney & Boyatzis, 2022). Such compromises not only regulate religious practices but also strengthen couples' commitment to each other. Psychologically, compromise processes help reduce stress and protect identity integrity. Sociologically, practices that enable different religious identities to coexist support social acceptance of diversity. Thus, openness in communication, empathy, and mutual respect can transform religious differences from destructive forces into enriching experiences.

The degree of harmony in managing religious differences within romantic relationships emerges as a central factor directly influencing relationship satisfaction. Reaching common ground on religious values and practices not only reduces the risk of conflict but also strengthens stability and satisfaction within the relationship. Research demonstrates that couples with high religious concordance experience stronger attachment security, resolve communication problems more constructively, and report greater relationship satisfaction. Religious similarity increases value coherence, enabling partners to understand one another more deeply and provide mutual support. Conversely, when religious beliefs are misaligned, a noticeable decline in relationship satisfaction may occur. Disagreements about religious practices or values can lead to conflict in both daily life and long-term plans. This becomes particularly important in institutional contexts such as marriage. When one partner's religious expectations are not met by the other, frustration, mistrust, and communication problems can emerge. Yet, some studies show that when religious differences are approached with flexibility and mutual respect, they do not necessarily harm relationship satisfaction (Vasilenko et al., 2020). Psychologically, religious harmony strengthens feelings of belonging and supports identity integrity. Sociologically, since family and societal approval processes often use religious harmony as a key criterion, couples in concordant relationships face less external pressure. Thus, religious harmony is a decisive factor not only for personal happiness but also for family harmony and social acceptance.

In modern societies, increasing cultural and religious diversity has raised the likelihood of individuals from different faiths entering into romantic relationships. This development, while bringing potential risks of conflict, also introduces new processes of adaptation. How couples approach religious differences plays a critical role in the sustainability of their relationships. The literature emphasizes that religious diversity does not necessarily have to undermine relationships; rather, if couples cultivate flexible communication and mutual respect, these differences can become enriching experiences. For example, jointly experiencing religious rituals, adapting shared celebrations, or respectfully accepting symbols from different faiths helps partners understand one another better and strengthens their bond. The process of adaptation in religious diversity is not limited to couples but extends to families and broader social contexts. Families' willingness to accept different faiths directly affects couples' motivation and sense of security in maintaining their relationship. At the societal level, tolerance toward diversity determines the degree of social pressure felt in such relationships. In more open societies, couples manage religious differences more successfully, whereas in closed communities, religious heterogeneity may pose significant obstacles (Markova & Sandal, 2021). Psychologically, empathy, trust, and mutual support are essential in adaptation processes. When partners attempt to understand each other's religious worlds, differences are perceived less as threats and more as opportunities for learning. Sociologically, when religious diversity is embraced as part of social integration, romantic relationships contribute not only to individuals' lives but also to broader social peace. Thus, adaptation processes in religious diversity enable individuals to build more inclusive, tolerant, and stable structures both in their personal relationships and in wider social contexts.

Strategies that couples develop to cope with the challenges of interfamily religious differences are crucial for relationship sustainability. Current literature shows that these strategies often revolve around open communication, developing empathy, flexibility in religious practices, and emphasizing shared values. Couples seek to reduce tensions arising from religious differences by strengthening mutual understanding, respecting each other's faiths, and maintaining balance in daily life. Within this framework, reinterpreting rituals together, blending traditions, and creating joint celebrations occupy an important place among coping strategies. At the same time, individuals rely not only on their own efforts but also on professional support to manage these challenges. Psychological counseling and couples therapy contribute to healthier management of conflicts rooted in religious differences. In recent years, family therapy approaches increasingly incorporate religious and cultural dimensions, with counselors guiding couples in both preserving individual identities

and building common ground in their relationship (Mahoney & Boyatzis, 2022). Professional counseling helps couples improve communication skills, resolve conflicts constructively, and view differences not as threats but as enriching factors. Psychologically, such strategies help reduce anxiety, strengthen belonging, and restore trust. Sociologically, coping mechanisms help harmonize interfamily relations, reducing conflicts at the societal level. In conclusion, coping strategies and professional counseling are among the most important tools that enable religious differences to transform from destructive elements into constructive experiences in romantic relationships.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that religious differences in romantic relationships can serve as both sources of conflict and opportunities for growth. Family approval and social pressures emerge as major factors restricting couples' decision-making processes, while communication skills and compromise in religious practices play a critical role in overcoming these limitations. Couples with high religious harmony experience greater satisfaction and commitment, while adaptation processes in contexts of religious diversity help partners understand each other better and build stronger foundations for their relationships. These findings reveal that romantic relationships are multilayered structures, extending beyond the individual level to family and society. Moreover, coping strategies and counseling practices hold a significant place among the findings. The ways in which couples handle challenges directly determine relationship sustainability. Particularly, strategies based on empathy, open communication, and mutual respect prove effective in reducing conflicts and increasing relationship satisfaction. Professional counseling and therapy provide couples with new perspectives for managing tensions arising from religious differences, offering constructive foundations for the future of the relationship. In this regard, making counseling centers and psychological support services more sensitive to religious and cultural diversity can also provide significant contributions to social cohesion. In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that religious differences in romantic relationships have multidimensional effects, with both negative and positive aspects. While family pressure, social approval, and value conflicts may create problems, compromise, communication, and counseling provide pathways to overcoming these difficulties. This suggests that religious differences, rather than being obstacles, can become opportunities for learning, growth, and strengthening for couples. A holistic evaluation of the findings offers hopeful insights into the future of romantic relationships within the context of religious diversity in modern societies.

Argument

This study discussed the reflections of religious belief differences between families on romantic relations in the light of the current literature of the last five years and discussed the findings from a psychological perspective with sociological perspective. Findings, family approval and social pressures are a decisive element in relationships, communication forms and reconciliation in religious practices shape the relationships of couples, religious harmony strengthens the satisfaction of relationships and contributes to the sustainability of relationships in diversity. These results show that religious differences affect not only the special ties between individuals, but also the family structure and social norms. Especially in modern societies, the increasing cultural and religious diversity requires that romantic relations should be redefined in a more flexible, inclusive and negotiating -based (Markova & Sandal, 2021). An important inference of the study is that religious differences always play a destructive role in relationships. On the contrary, it is seen that these differences can be transformed into an enriching experience in relationships if couples develop empathy, mutual respect and flexibility. In this context, the processes of coping with religious belief differences and coping processes are important not only in terms of individual psychological well -being, but also in terms of peaceful life of different identities at the social level. It can be said that consultancy services and psychological support mechanisms undertake a critical function at this point. However, this study has certain limitations. First of all, since the research was based on published studies only in the last five years, comprehensive research conducted in the previous period has been excluded. This limits the possibility of presenting a wider perspective of the historical development of the literature. In addition, the fact that the literature screening is largely limited to English and Turkish resources narrows the scope of the data that can be obtained from studies conducted in different cultures. Another limitation of the study is that it is based only on literature screening; Since empirical data is not collected, the results obtained remain at the theoretical level and direct observation -based findings cannot be presented. The examination of future research in depth of qualitative methods of couples from different religious groups will reveal a more detailed picture both at the individual and family level. In addition, comparative research to be carried out in different cultural contexts can contribute to understanding whether the effects of religious diversity on romantic relations are universal or binding. Applied studies in the field of psychological counseling and family therapy will help to develop practical suggestions on how to manage religious belief differences by couples. Another important dimension of the

debate is that religious belief differences are reflected not only on interchangeable relations, but also on social peace and cultural diversity policies. The relations between couples among different religious identities make the approach of society to diversity and the capacity of differences together. In this respect, although the findings of the study have been obtained in the case of romantic relations, it provides clues to the management of religious diversity in the broad social context. In addition, research results have practical contributions in terms of family counseling, psychological support programs and educational policies. It is seen that the relationship problems arising from religious differences can be managed not only by the subjective efforts of individuals, but also by professional guidance and community -based support mechanisms. In this context, the development of cultural and religious diversity -sensitive programs in consultancy centers can contribute to the health of couples to experience healthier adaptation processes. Finally, the findings of this study also shed light on future research. In particular, comparative studies in different cultures can help to understand whether the effects of religious belief differences on relationships are universal or binding. In addition, in -depth research, which examines one -to -one experience of couples with qualitative methods, will provide more concrete and rich data in this field. Thus, both academic literature and applied consultancy field will have the opportunity to develop a more inclusive and constructive perspective in the relationships of couples with different religious beliefs.

Conclusion

This study discussed the reflections of religious belief differences between families on romantic relations from a sociological and psychological perspective and evaluated in the light of the literature of the last five years. Findings generally reveal that family approval and social pressures have a strong effect on couples, that compromise in religious practices and religious practices increase the sustainability of relations, that religious belief harmony plays a decisive role in the satisfaction of relationships and that the adaptation processes developed in religious diversity provide enriching experiences in relationships. In addition, it is seen that coping strategies and professional counseling services offer an important support mechanism for couples in the management of conflicts arising from religious differences. These findings show that religious belief differences directly affect not only the special ties between individuals, but also the family structure and social adaptation processes. The importance of the results is that increasing cultural and religious diversity in modern societies show that romantic relations lead to new fields of adaptation as well as new fields of tension. Although religious belief differences between families are often a source of pressure and conflict for couples, it can contribute to the strengthening of relationships thanks to appropriate forms of communication, mutual understanding and flexibility. In this respect, the study shows that religious differences can be considered not only risk, but also as a source of potential wealth. In a sociological dimension, these findings can serve a more inclusive understanding in family and relationship structures; In a psychological dimension, it reveals that couples can strengthen the feelings of trust, belonging and commitment. Therefore, this research makes significant contributions both at the individual and social level. At the individual level, while emphasizing the importance of communication, reconciliation and consultancy processes in the management of religious differences; It shows that relations based on the adoption of cultural diversity at the social level can contribute to social peace and harmony. In this context, study has the potential to be an important reference for researchers, consultants and policy makers who want to understand the role of religious belief differences in romantic relations.

In the future, understanding the effects of religious belief differences on romantic relations is important not only in academic terms, but also for the integrity of social life. The relationships established by couples with different beliefs are one of the most visible areas of cultural diversity in modern societies. Therefore, despite religious differences, revealing how sustainable relations can be built will contribute to both the healthy development of family structures and the strengthening of so-

cial peace. In addition, policies and social programs to be developed in the context of religious belief differences directly affect not only the private lives of individuals, but also the future of social harmony. When educational institutions, family counseling centers and religious communities develop approaches that see differences as an opportunity to learn and develop, this will create a more inclusive and tolerant environment in romantic relationships. Finally, the findings of this study not only contribute to current academic debates, but also give important messages at a practical level. The key to coping with religious differences in relationships is to act within the framework of dialogue, understanding and common values instead of pressure and conflict. Thus, religious diversity can become the guarantee of both individual happiness and social integration.

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