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Research Paper

Impact of Transnational Culture to Control Terrorism in Muslim Countries: A Critical Explanation from *Tawhidic* Paradigm

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Abstract

This paper tries to address the impact of transnational culture to reduce the terrorism. According to the definition, transnational culture consists of three things which are basically cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity, multi-languages. This transnational culture can play a vital role to reduce the terrorism in the Muslim countries especially in Turkey and Bangladesh. For this research purpose, the study obtained the opinions of 59 post graduate students from different universities in Turkey and Bangladesh through a survey on the impact of transnational culture in reducing terrorism. The study found that transnational culture has a significant impact on changing people's perspective about the need to reduce terrorism in today's Muslim world. The informants also viewed that the *Tawhidic* paradigm (Unity of God) offers spiritual dimension to educate and nurture people to respect other views, multi-ethnicity, cultures and languages which may lead to reduce the terrorism in the Muslim nations. Nevertheless, the results of the study are constrained by the size of the sample and robustness of the analyses.

Keywords

Transnational culture, globalization, Muslim countries, *tawhidic* paradigm, terrorism

1. Introduction

The impact of Transnational Culture in reducing terrorism in Muslim countries becomes the hot issue nowadays. According to the theory, Transnational Culture refers to shared values or ways of life from cross countries that embrace cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity, multi-languages etc. as a result of globalization or internationalization movement. Transnational culture works across the countries through globalization and internationalization which are mostly the elimination of barriers to trade, greater communication, and cultural exchange. Moreover, the theory behind

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globalization is that worldwide openness will promote the inherent wealth and good relationship among all Muslim nations. Unfortunately, so far, the Muslim Ummah could not get the most benefit from transnational culture to reduce terrorism in this globalization era. Even though Muslim countries have a common organization, namely OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference), still they cannot stand for each other. That is why; Muslim countries are fighting each other which lead to terrorism in the Muslim countries.

According to Fletcher (2015), it seems like today, more than ever, commonalities in cultural practice are all over the place when thinking transnationally. Neo-liberalism, globalizations have come to the mind when it is thought about transnational. However, Paul also thinks that, the most interesting space for discussing transnational cultural practice is in the realm of technology. The world grows smaller as modes and vehicles of communication become faster, more efficient and more easily accessible globally.

For example, Facebook is in many ways a transnational cultural meeting space where people from different nations, backgrounds, etc. are all status updating, liking and scrolling together.

Therefore, transnational culture means the sharing ideas, thoughts, values to others by respecting other culture regardless the differences in multi cultures, multi-languages, multi-ethnicities and so on. Transnational culture helps us to embrace the other views, other thoughts without harming each other.

2. Objectives

The major objectives of this explanatory study were to identify the true meaning of transnational culture, to mitigate the challenge of terrorism in Muslim nations through transnational culture especially in Turkey and Bangladesh and to alleviate the challenge of terrorism through the *Tawhidic* paradigm.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Terrorism

Terrorism has been a controversial concept, and this research adopts one of its well-known definitions: “the deliberate use or threat of violence against non-combatants by a non-state actor for the achievement of political ends, typically with the intent of creating a wider psychological impact” (Patrick, 2014).

Terrorism is often classified by researchers into domestic and international terrorism. Choi (2016) was one of the scholars who tried to distinguish between domestic and international terrorism. Terrorist attacks that targeted Oklahoma City or Tokyo subway could be labelled domestic. On the other hand, international terrorism refers to a terrorist act that takes place in a certain country; however, it involves perpetrators, victims, institutions, governments, or citizens of another country. Choi reveals that the term- “International Terrorism” does not have a spatial significance, i.e. terrorists do not have to leave their country of residence and move to another country to be committing an act of international terrorism, they also do not need to be attacking under the umbrella of huge terrorist organizations to fulfill the criteria of international terrorism. The main criterion of international terrorism is to be able, while examining the targets, victims or terrorists involved in the attack, to identify the presence of a minimum of two nationalities (Choi, 2016:220) According to Robert (2004), Terrorism may also be viewed as a means by which terrorists communicate with their targets. An attack provides a symbol whereby terrorists are communicating to the victims a message, for example, government weakness or dissatisfaction with a political situation. These types of attacks can be seen in the targets of terror. For example, destruction of government buildings or financial centers would touch the very heart of a country's foundation, symbolizing the inability of the system to with stand the power of the terrorists.

Another possible explanation of terrorism is financial disruption or economic devastation. Physical acts of terror, i.e. bombing a building, can certainly cause extensive property damage; but whether this is the ultimate goal of a terrorist act is unclear. Large-scale attacks often cause secondary economic efforts resulting from the emotional impacts of terror. This would tend to support the view that terror is predominantly driven to make a symbolic statement.

3.2. Impact of terrorism in Turkey and Bangladesh

Terrorism refers the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. According to Wikipedia, In the 1980s and 1990s, Jihadist terrorism in Turkey was an isolated phenomenon represented by the Turkish Hezbollah and the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders' Front. Since the 2000s, there has been a rise in attacks from Islamist groups, some with links to Al-Qaeda.

In Wikipedia, we can also find that, the “Dokumaclar” is an Islamic terrorist group composed of about 60 Turkish militants who joined ISIL. The group is responsible for the 2015 Suruç bombing which resulted in 32 deaths. Other attacks, like the 2017 Istanbul nightclub shooting, were perpetrated by Islamic State. Thus, it proves that, many terrorists are active to create havoc in Turkey to destroy the harmony and peaceful lifestyle in Turkey.

On the hand, In Bangladesh, the group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh was formed sometime in 1998, and gained prominence in 2001. The organization was officially banned in February 2005 after attacks on NGOs, but struck back in August when 300 bombs were detonated almost simultaneously throughout Bangladesh, targeting Shahjalal International Airport, government buildings and major hotels. The Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), also called Ansar Bangla is an Islamic extremist organization in Bangladesh, implicated in crimes including some brutal attacks and murders of atheist bloggers from 2013 to 2015 and a bank heist in April 2015.

3.3. Impact of transnational culture to reduce terrorism

According to MacFarlane (2005), The main current terrorist threats in the Asia-Pacific region derive from formal Qaida, Jemaah Islamiyah, Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf group, and a number of other groups associated with these. Again, the importance of networking and mutual cooperation between these groups cannot be over-emphasized.

MacFarlane (2005) has also mentioned that, continuation of high incidence of terrorism and transnational crime in the region as demonstrated by problems associated with individual terrorist incidents, illicit narcotics, human smuggling, arms tracking, cybercrime, and the like it is understandable that the public perception may be that regional efforts against terrorism and transnational crime are achieving poor results.

Nevertheless, there is no need for undue pessimism. Over the last six years, the regional states have achieved a far greater understanding of transnational crime issues threatening the Asia-Pacific and genuine progress has been achieved in reaching agreement on how these threats should be addressed. This level of understanding and cooperation is also facilitating cooperation on terrorism, and certainly in areas where terrorism and transnational crime overlap. There may be a long way to go to emulate the level of cooperation achieved in, say, the European Union, but it would be wrong not to acknowledge that a lot has been achieved. However, it is essential that this momentum should be maintained (MacFarlane, 2005).

In a 1998 study, Johnston noted that despite increased public awareness of transnational terrorism and organized crime, reflected in the amount of attention given to these issues by political leaders and the media alike, there is still an important gap in the debate.

However, nowadays terrorism becomes a challenge in many Muslim nations due to disrespect the cultural ethnicity and other beliefs thus it must be mitigated through the establishing of

transnational culture among the Muslim nations. In the figure 1 below, clearly mentions that, transnational culture embraces the cultural diversity, multi ethnicity and multi-languages among Muslim nations through globalization and internationalization across the countries, unfortunately the Muslim countries are failed to portray the true meaning of transnational culture.

That is why many Muslim countries are involved in war against Muslim countries. They do not welcome the other ethnicity, other language and other cultures which is totally wrong attitude among Muslim nations. Islam always appreciate the transnational culture which means the cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity and multi-language because Islam believes in one God and we all are servant to Him which is *Tawhidic* paradigm.

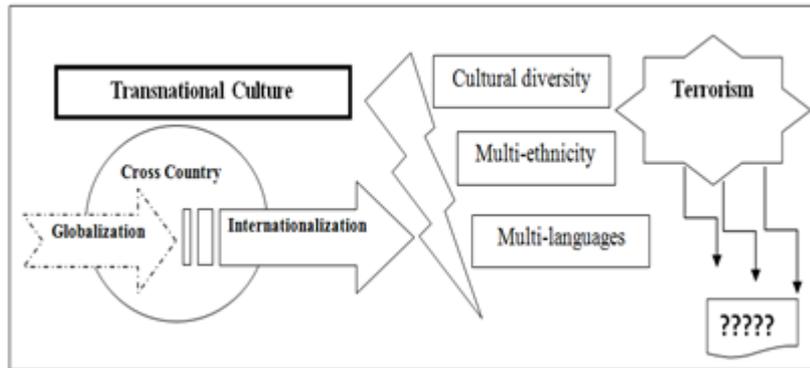


Figure-1: Challenges of transnational culture to reduce terrorism

3.4. Explanation from *Tawhidic* Paradigm

The impact of Transnational Culture can be explained from *Tawhidic* paradigm. Sarif and Ismail (2011a) argued *Tawhidic* paradigm implies ‘global’ thinking emotionally, cognitively and spiritually. Ismail and Sarif (2011) contended that *Tawhidic* paradigm is very essential element to spark ‘transformation’ as far as global dimension. Globalization from *Tawhidic* paradigm (Unity of God) that provides harmonious linkages between the worldly affairs (*al Dunya*) and the Hereafter (*al Akhirah*) in the context of business (Rahman, 1995; Beekun, 1997; Hamid, 1999).

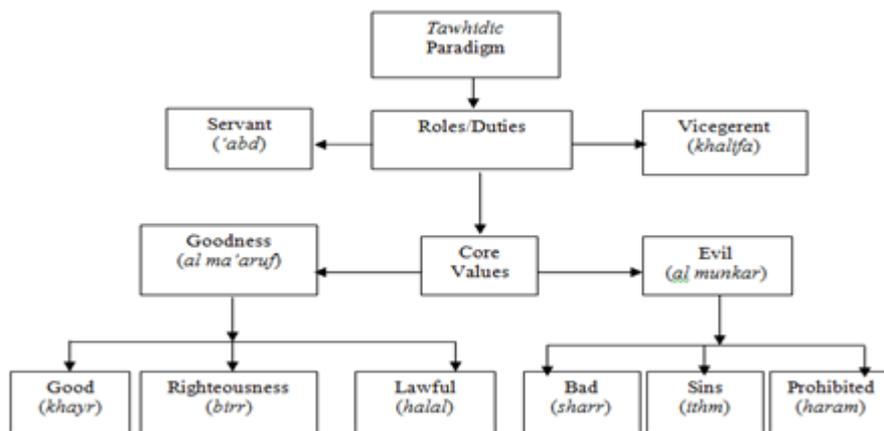


Figure-2: Fundamental principles of *Tawhidic* paradigm

Based on this premise, transnational culture in globalization from Tawhidic paradigm directs ethical obligations vis-à-vis promoting goodness (*'amr bil ma'aruf*) and preventing evil (*nahi anil munkar*) (Beekun, 1997; Hamid, 1999). Prerequisites to one's execution of the fundamental duties are possession of knowledge (*al 'ilm*), true conviction (*al iman*), and integrity (*al ihsan*) (Mawdudi, 1991; Laming, 2002; Ismail, 2004). Knowledge incorporates broad concept of *ma'aruf* which includes goodness (*al khayr*), righteousness (*al birr*) and lawful (*halal*) which deserve positive rewards (*ajr*) (Mawdudi, 1991). *Munkar* includes bad (*sharr*), sins (*ithm*) and prohibited (*haram*), which are related to corresponding punishment (*al 'idam*) (Mawdudi, 1991). Thus, embracing Transnational Culture can be established through the subscription of Tawhidic paradigm along with the good deeds prescribed in Islam. Allah SWT said in the Quran: And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one (Tawhidic paradigm); and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him." (Surah Ankabut: 46).

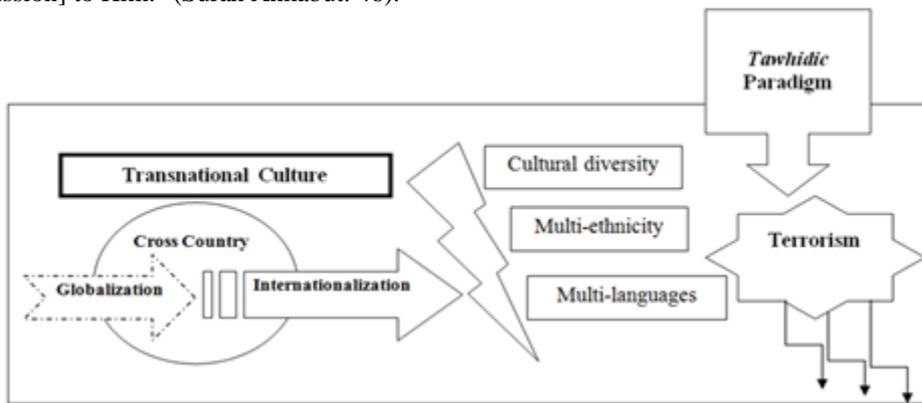


Figure-3: The framework of the study

In the figure 3 above, it clearly states that, If we can inculcate *Tawhidic* paradigm which reminds us that, there is only one God who is watching us every time and all will be accountable to him for our bad deeds then definitely everybody will be concerned with other culture, beliefs and ethnicity which eventually reduce the chances of terrorism in Muslim nations. Allah SWT said in the Quran: Say: "O People of the Book! Come to what is common between us and you: That we worship none but God (*Tawhidic* Paradigm), that we associate no partners with Him that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords other than Allah. If then they turn back, say: 'Bear witness that we are bowing to Allah's will.'" (Quran, 3:64).

4. Methodology

Study population: Primary data were collected from different universities at Istanbul in Turkey and Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Sample size: 59 post graduate students.

Sampling technique: The judgmental sampling procedure was used to select the sample units from post graduate students who were willing to respond to the questionnaire. Hardcopy and online copy (Google Form) were distributed to collect the data.

Question design: Questions are designed in five points Likert scale, where 5 indicates strongly agree, 4 indicates agree, 3 indicates neutral, 2 indicates disagree and 1 indicates strongly disagree.

Analysis and presentation of data: Data have been analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and presented in a descriptive way. Although this study has been conducted

mainly based on primary data but some secondary data were also collected from the secondary sources e.g. published books, journals and internet.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

Gender: Out of the 59 samples of post graduate students, 39 respondents that means 66.1% respondents were male and 26 respondents that means 33.9 % respondents were female.

Age: Most of the respondents (38%) are in the age of 20 to 25 years. These young respondents are still continuing their masters. Some of the respondents are doing Ph.D. whose age is between 30 to 40 years.

Country of origin: Respondents are from Bangladesh, Turkey, Sudan, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Somalia, India who are currently studding in Bangladesh and Turkey.

Marital Status: Out of the 59 samples of respondents, 41 respondents that means 69.5% respondents' marital status is Single, 11 respondents that means 18.6% respondents' marital status is Married- but no children, 7 respondents that means 11.9% respondents' marital status is Married and have children. The table-1 below shows all the demographic information of the respondents.

Table-1: A glance of demographic factors of respondents

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Gender	59	1.00	79.00	1.3390	.47743	.228
Age	59	4.00	89.00	1.5085	.81733	.668
Academic Qualification	59	1.00	64.00	1.0847	.28089	.079
Marital Status	59	2.00	84.00	1.4237	.69984	.490
Valid N (listwise)	59					

5.2. Analysis of the Research Questions

5.2.1. Respondents' thinking about terrorism

Almost 80% of the respondents have mentioned that, they were agreed and strongly agreed that, terrorism (violence) never brings happiness in any country.

85% respondents were agreed and strongly agreed that, terrorists should be identified in the very beginning and must be given counseling to them. 95% of the respondents have mentioned that, they never wanted to be involved in any terrorism activities in the country. Table-2 is designed for the respondents' thoughts.

Table-2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Terrorism (violence) never brings happiness in any country.	59	4.00	254.00	4.3051	1.22128	1.492
Terrorists should be identified in the very beginning and must be given counseling to them.	59	3.00	254.00	4.3051	.77135	.595
I never wanted to be involved in any terrorism activities in Turkey.	59	3.00	273.00	4.6271	.64054	.410
Valid N (listwise)	59					

5.2.2. Perception about the terrorism in the country

Table-3 depicts that 60% of the respondents said that, terrorism is one of the main problems in the country. But almost 80% respondents believe that, terrorism must be stopped by anyhow.

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics about the perception of terrorism in the country

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Terrorism is one of the main problems in the country.	59	4.00	195.00	3.3051	1.34234	1.802
Terrorism must be stopped in the country by anyhow.	59	4.00	249.00	4.2203	1.01824	1.037
Valid N (listwise)	59					

5.2.3. Perception about the terrorist

Table-4 shows that 83% respondents said that, they do not like who are terrorists even though they are so-called Muslims. 85% respondents were agreed and strongly agreed that, most of the terrorists are involved in terrorism without knowing the bad impact of terrorism.

Table-4: Descriptive Statistics of perception about the terrorists

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
I do not like who are terrorists even though they are so-called Muslims.	59	4.00	270.00	4.5763	.83467	.697
I think most of the terrorists are involved in terrorism without knowing the bad impact of terrorism.	59	4.00	245.00	4.1525	.92501	.856
Valid N (listwise)	59					

5.2.4. Realization about the transnational culture to reduce terrorism

Table-5 illustrates that 75% of the respondents think that, they should enhance transnational culture (shared values or ways of life from cross countries that embrace cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity, multi-languages) in the country.

71% of the respondents believe that, transnational culture (respecting and sharing other views, cultures) can reduce the terrorism in the country.

Table-5: Descriptive Statistics of perception about the terrorists

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
We should enhance transnational culture (shared values or ways of life from cross countries that embrace cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity, multi-languages) in the country	59	4.00	230.00	3.8983	.86493	.748
Transnational culture (respecting and sharing other views, cultures) can reduce the terrorism in the country.	59	4.00	228.00	3.8644	.89938	.809
Valid N (listwise)	59					

5.2.5. *Tawhidic Paradigm to reduce terrorism through transnational culture*

77% respondents mentioned that, they think *Tawhidic* paradigm (Oneness of God- who is watching us all time) can also reduce the terrorism in the country.

Almost 80% respondents believe that, they must uphold the *Tawhidic* paradigm (Unity of God) in the country. 93% respondents mentioned that they believe that, if anyone believes in one God (All will be accountable to Him), he/she cannot be involved in terrorism.

Table-5: Descriptive Statistics of *Tawhidic* Paradigm to reduce terrorism through transnational culture

	N	Range	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
I think Tawhidic paradigm (Oneness of God- who is watching us all time) can also reduce the terrorism in Turkey.	59	4.00	235.00	3.9831	1.07465	1.155
We must uphold the Tawhidic paradigm (Unity of God) in Turkey.	59	3.00	244.00	4.1356	.77588	.602
I believe if anyone believes in one God (All will be accountable to Him), he/she cannot be involved in terrorism.	59	44.00	307.00	5.2034	5.34590	28.579

5.3. Major Findings of the research

Terrorism (violence) never brings happiness in any country. Everybody should stand against the terrorism. Concerned citizen cannot be involved in the terrorism and terrorists should be identified in the very beginning for counseling to them. Terrorism becomes one of the major problems in the country and must be sopped anyhow. No one loves the terrorists no matter whether they are Muslims or not. We all should enhance transnational culture (shared values or ways of life from cross countries that embrace cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity, multi-languages) in the country to reduce terrorism. Almost all the respondents believe that, believe in one God (*Tawhidic* paradigm) can reduce the terrorism and must uphold the *Tawhidic* paradigm in our daily life.

6. Recommendation

Every citizen should come forward to control the terrorism in the country. The government must take initiatives to increase awareness about the bad impacts of terrorism. We must uphold the transnational culture (shared ideas, shared cultures, respect other views and so on) to get a peaceful country. The researchers believe that Turkey and Bangladesh should work together to share their cultures, ideas and thoughts to have better world. *Tawhidic* paradigm (Unity of God) must be incorporated in our life to reduce bad the deeds (terrorism) and increase the good deeds for the betterment of the whole Ummah.

7. Conclusion

The study obtained the opinions of 59 post graduate students from different universities in Turkey and Bangladesh through a survey on the impact of Transnational Culture in controlling terrorism in Muslim countries which becomes a rising issue in nowadays. The study found that Transnational Culture has a significant impact on changing people's perspective about the need to controll terrorism in Muslim countries. Hopefully, this study proves from the opinion of different post graduate students that the *Tawhidic* paradigm (Oneness of God) offers spiritual dimension to educate and nurture people to embrace cultural diversity, multi-ethnicity in reducing terrorism in

Muslim countries as a servant of Him. These survey findings will help the researchers to get the view from the young generation about the cultural differences, terrorism, respecting different ethnicity and so on. Nevertheless, the results of the study are constrained by the size of the sample and robustness of the analysis.

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