

The effect of autonomy reduction resulting from the teaching of taqlīd on the reduction of Muslims' acceptance of moral responsibility (A survey study in Qom-Iran)

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Abstract: Taqlīd is a rule in Islamic jurisprudence. Based on this rule, mature muslims who are not jurists accept a jurist's opinions (marja'-i-taqlīd) and act on them. Taqlīd reduces the autonomy of individuals in finding religious rules seriously. The research problem is whether there is a significant correlation between the "autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules" as an independent variable and "their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules" as a dependent variable. This problem was investigated in survey research with a population of 20 to 49 years old from Qom citizens by a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The sampling method was the quota, and the Pearson correlation test was used in the conclusion. According to the finding, there was a significant correlation in the research samples. So far, no research has been done by an empirical method about the taqlīd, which is the study's innovative aspect.

Keywords: Jurisprudential Taqlīd, Autonomy, Acceptance of Moral Responsibility, Qom Citizens, Muqallid, Marja'-i-taqlīd

Introduction

It is a report of a survey study done in Qom in 1400 AHS; it is a part of detailed and lengthy research entitled "*Ethical Study of Jurisprudential Taqlīd (Mujtahid, Muqallid, Rule)*." You can look at the complete version to access the complete research report.¹

The teaching of taqlīd in Islam

Taqlīd is an Islamic jurisprudence teaching, and its impact on autonomy reduction has been studied in this article. It is necessary to explain the taqlīd² in detail before starting the main topic to know what the taqlīd is, when it started and what its origin was.

During the Prophet Muhammad's period, muslims used to solve their jurisprudential problems by referring to the Quran and the Prophet. But sometimes, a question was posed, "what if the Quran and Sunnah have not answered a problem directly?" There is a narrative from the Prophet that if a person could not find the answer in the Quran and the Sunnah, he should perform ijtihād (Dārimī 1425 AH, vol. 1:47), i.e., follow independent reasoning. So at first, the word ijtihād referred to the jurisprudential ways that were apart from the Quran and Sunnah, e.g., Qīyās (Shāfi'ī 1430 AH:103, 371). In this regard, jurists who think that the only reliable jurisprudential method is to refer to the Quran and Sunnah knew ijtihād as the wrong way (Rāwandī 1405 AH, vol. 1:6).

After the Prophet's period, as time passed, more muslims recognized the need to perform ijtehad; they came to the conclusion that referring to the Quran and Sunnah is not enough to obtain all religious rules. According to Maqrīzī in 'Umar ibn Khaṭāb period, when Islamic lands had expanded, people used to refer to the Ṣaḥābih or Ṭābi'ūn, and if they could not find out a rule with their help, were performing ijtehad (Maqrīzī 1998:148). After a while, the meaning of the word ijtehad changed; every kind of effort to discover an Islamic rule was called ijtehad. So some scholars have defined it as "making an attempt to obtain the rule with a high probability [of correctness]" (Al-Āmidī 1424 AH, vol. 2:309; Ḥillī 1404 AH:240). In this definition, a "high probability" has been announced because they thought "certain" rules do not need for ijtehad and all muslims know them, e.g., the obligation to pray.

Gradually Jurisprudence Knowledge was formed, and jurisprudential schools were established. Different jurisprudential schools' scholars had contrasting opinions about the jurisprudential methods for discovering the rules. The first significant controversies arose between the schools of Madīnah and Kūfah (Qaṭān, n.d.:295). Many famous mujtahids were present in different cities and had the role of muftī (ibid: 301). During a

1. To get the complete version email the first writer.

2. For Arabic word's equivalent refer to the Appendix.

historical period, four jurisprudential schools surpassed the rest of the schools; they belonged to AbūḤanīfa (Ḥanafī), Mālik ibn Anas (Mālikī), Muhammad ibn Idrīs Shāfi‘ī (Shāfi‘ī) and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (Ḥanbalī). Due to reasons beyond the scope of this article, the principles of ijtihād were restricted to those four schools, and muslims tended to follow one of them (Abū Zuhrih 1996:302-303). To follow one of the four schools was called taqlīd (ibid).

Those four schools belonged to Sunni muslims. Shia muslims were solving their problems by referring to their Imams (Gurjī 1398:120). Their jurisprudential school was attributed to their sixth Imam, i.e., Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (Ḥimyarī 1413 AH: 357). Shias, after their Imams’ period, were made to perform ijtihād (Gurjī 1398:141), and the teaching of taqlīd was formed in the Shia sect like Sunni Islam (See: Ṭabāṭabā‘ī Yazdī 1430 AH, vol. 1:234-238).

According to Abu Zūhrih, ijtihād and taqlīd have different levels. In this regard, the Imams of schools have performed ijtihād to obtain the principles of jurisprudence. In the next levels, some mujtahids get the principles of jurisprudence from an Imam but perform ijtihād to obtain sub-rules. These mujtahids are an Imam’s muqallid, not totally. On the other hand, some muqallids follow a mujtahid completely. They do not have any kind of ijtihād and do not know anything about the reasons for the rules. They are totally muqallids (Abū Zuhrih 1996:330-337). We investigate this kind of muqallid in this research. In this level of taqlīd, a muqallid acts on a mujtahid’s opinions. He follows him without knowing about the reasons (See: Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī 1430 AH, vol. 2:351). These muqallids know nothing about principles of jurisprudence and Islamic rules reasons.

We should consider some disagreements. For example, it seems some Sunni scholars have forbidden taqlīd totally (See: Shukānī 1976:41). According to them, all muslims have a duty to refer to Islamic sources and obtain religious rules. In contrast, most muslims accept the taqlīd. Another disagreement is on following one of the four mentioned jurisprudential schools that some Sunni scholars deny its obligation, especially in contemporary times (See: Abū Zuhrih 1996:303). It means they believe it is possible to perform ijtihād without considering one of the four schools’ principles. Of course, new mujtahids can have their muqallids.

To summarize, if a person refers to religious reasons like the Quran and Sunnah and makes an effort to discover Islamic rules, he/she performs ijtihād, and the person is called a mujtahid. A person who refers to a mujtahid to obtain Islamic rules is called muqallid, and its work is called taqlīd. A mujtahid who others follow is called Marja‘-i-taqlīd. We mean by muqallid in this research, “a person who knows nothing about religious reasons and acts on a mujtahid’s opinions totally.”

Problem

It seems that the teaching of taqlīd causes autonomy reduction of muqallid. It is intended, in this research, to investigate the effect of “autonomy reduction of muqallid in finding the religious rules” on “the reduction of their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules.” Firstly, a definition of autonomy and acceptance of moral responsibility should be given to clarify how the taqlīd could reduce these two variables.

Autonomy is studied from different views in psychology (Ryan and Deci 2006) and ethics (e.g., See: Mill, 1926, ch.3:32). The word autonomy originates in Greek. Its opposite term is heteronomy (See: Steiner and Stewart 2009), and the word paternalism is also used in contrast (Conly, 2014:349). Keenan conducted extensive research into the concept of autonomy and finally concluded that autonomy means “The exercise of considered, independent judgment to effect adesirable outcome.” (Keenan 1999:561). According to another definition, autonomy means “the capacity to be one’s own person, to live one’s life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one’s own and not the product of manipulative or distorting external forces, to be in this way independent” (Christman 2020).

Regarding the definition of moral responsibility, this concept, like any other fundamental concept in philosophy, is controversial (See: Fischer 1999), and it is impossible to study all ideas. Gary Watson presented one of the more relevant definitions for this research topic. He stated that two conceptions – or perhaps aspects – are related to moral responsibility. One of them is self-disclosure. According to this conception, moral responsibility happens when the action can be assigned to the person and her/his choices, and the person can be considered free from any external compulsion. The second conception is accountability; according to that, everyone must be accountable for her/his mistake (ibid:96-97). Based on this view, it can be said that people who accept their responsibility are accountable for their behaviors that come from their own will (without external compulsion).

Considering the two mentioned definitions of autonomy, independence in judgment and decision are essential factors in the autonomy concept. Muqallid undoubtedly decreases his independence when he accepts the taqlīd and assigns Marja‘-i-taqlīd the task of discovering the religious rules. He/she does not make a decision lonely on what actions are correct to do and how he/she must conduct. So in this research, it is assumed that

taqlīd reduces autonomy. I did not try to prove it. Of course, it has been proved due to the answers from muqallids to the questionnaire. But the significant matter that we tried to prove is that autonomy reduction affects the acceptance of responsibility and reduces it. According to the mentioned definition of moral responsibility, humans must be accountable for their voluntary behaviors. I want to prove that when the autonomy of the muqallid reduces, it causes a reduction in his/her accountability for voluntary behaviors. It is a matter that needs proving, and I will explain it after presenting the research findings.

Here we must consider the Shia and Sunni disagreements related to the research topic. The population and samples of this research are from Qom city, where Shia Muslims live in it. As mentioned, some Sunni scholars deny taqlīd completely. Definitely, the result of the research does not relate to those Sunni Muslims who deny taqlīd entirely. In contrast, for other Sunni Muslims who accept taqlīd, the result relates to them based on how much they follow a mujtahid. However, as mentioned at the end of the article, it is impossible to generalize the research finding. Still, we can consider generalization as a probability and try to investigate it in other research.

The other difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims is that some Sunnis follow the Ash'arī school in theology. According to Ash'arī, moral good and bad are divine; i.e., humans have no ability to find out good and bad by themselves. Every action that God says is good or bad is correct (Ash'arī 1397:20-32, 34, 194, 209). This theory is called the Divine Command Theory in western philosophy (Gensler 2008:70). Is our research problem meaningless according to Ash'arī's theory? Because if humans do not have the ability to recognize good and bad, how is it possible to ask them to be responsible? Firstly, muqallids must recognize good and bad actions, then ask them to be responsible. But I think this disagreement cannot change anything. Since even according to Ash'arī, Muslims are responsible for their behaviors. The only difference is that they must discover good and bad by referring to religious sources. They cannot use their reasons, but after they find out good and bad from the Quran and Sunnah, they are responsible; otherwise, Qi'yamah becomes meaningless.

Significance of the Problem

German doctors had followed the laws of their country when they committed the crimes in World War II, but they did not use their moral consciousness. In other words, they had followed orders absolutely. Eventually, they were convicted under the universal moral law (Pojman 2014: 494). Imagine that a society's individuals are like soldiers who obey all their commander's orders without thinking. The idea is that if humans do not consider their consciousness and follow another person absolutely, it will not have good moral consequences because these humans do not know themselves as responsible for their actions. We claim that muqallids do not accept their responsibilities because they act on mujtahid's opinions without thinking about the goodness and badness of their actions. The importance of this issue is undeniable from a moral point of view.

Of course, according to some research, in Iranian society, the obedience of individuals to the Maraj'-i-taqlīd has decreased (Alipour et al., 2019). They act more autonomously.

Background of the Study

Research has already been done to prove the relationship between autonomy and responsibility (Mathes 2005), but they have nothing to do with taqlīd. I divide the taqlīd background into two parts:

The first part of these studies dealt with ijtihād and taqlīd from the jurisprudential point of view. For example, the treatise of *ijtihād and taqlīd*, written by Rūḥ Allāh Khumīnī, has been published by Imam Khumīnī's Institute of Publishing works. In this book, the position of the jurist is explained. One of the book issues is the justification of taqlīd. These books' authors do not have moral considerations. They want to discover Islamic rules and use jurisprudential methods.

The second group considered the social aspects of taqlīd and some issues related to the contemporary world. For example, Muhammad Taqī Mišbāḥ Yazdī gave lectures that have been published in a book entitled "*The role of taqlīd in human life.*" This work studies the taqlīd without considering the jurisprudential methodology. He tried to justify the taqlīd rationally.

I could not find any research which studies the relation of taqlīd, autonomy, and moral responsibility, so it is a new topic. In addition, the main difference between this essay and other studies is the usage of the empirical method. All former studies used library research and analytical method.

The Hypothesis of the Study

The research hypothesis is that there is a correlation in samples between the two variables: "autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules" and "their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules;" in the way that by reducing the first variable, the second variable will also be reduced.

Research Method

It is survey research. I used a questionnaire with closed-ended questions.

Definition of Variables and Questionnaire

It should be noted that taqlid was not considered a variable, but “the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules” was the independent variable. This variable is directly related to taqlid. Because by accepting taqlid, people’s autonomy will decrease, and this issue was considered in the questionnaire. The dependent variable is the “acceptance of moral responsibility of individuals in the act of obeying religious rules.” The two main concepts that play a key role in variables are autonomy and moral responsibility. In the process of making the questionnaire, first, the determining factors constituting variables were recognized, and then the questions were prepared according to them. You can refer to the complete version of the research to review the factors considered.

After studying the concepts and determining the factors, two sets of statements were made. Each group of statements was supposed to measure the amount of a variable. The five-level Likert scale was used to scale the responses with the options strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Apart from the two sets of sentences, three other sections were added to the questionnaire. First, a short text with some examples was added to the questionnaire. It was predicted that people would have different understandings of the contradiction between the jurisprudential rules and the moral consciousness of the muqallid. The introductory text helped the respondents have a similar understanding of the questions and the questionnaire topic.

The second part was demographic questions, and the third part of the questionnaire contained five questions that aimed to assess the person’s fidelity to Islamic main beliefs and practices. If a person has no belief in Islam or denies the practical rules of Islam altogether, her/his answers will be useless. Because the first variable was related to the finding of religious rules, and the second variable was related to obeying them. It is meaningless to measure these variables in a person who has no concerns about the mentioned factors. In other words, samples who had at least partially accepted the main Islamic beliefs and rules were needed. Therefore, five questions were prepared to assess this factor. The first three questions assessed the person’s belief in God, Islam, and the existence of Islamic rules. Two other questions have assessed the person’s fidelity to two basic practices in Islam: daily prayers and fasting. The vast majority of those who denied the existence of God, the Islam or Islamic rules, in answer to the first three questions, were not considered samples.

The final questionnaire was as follows; only the gray sections of the table were omitted:

Table1: Questionnaire

The introductory text	
Sometimes, there is a contradiction between the moral opinion of individuals and jurisprudential opinion or fatwā of the marja’-i-taqlid. Some questions below are related to such contradictions. Some examples are mentioned for your acquaintance with these cases, but they are not necessary, and you should answer without considering a specified example. Because your idea about a particular example is not important, your viewpoint on individual duty in a situation of contradiction between the moral opinion of the individual and the fatwā of the marja’-i-taqlid is important. You may agree in some or all of these examples with jurisprudential opinions but disagree in other cases or do not have a disagreement at all. Some examples of these contradictions are: A) According to religious reasons, the marja’-i-taqlid concludes that killing the apostate is obligatory, but the person has an inner belief that the action is not morally right B) According to religious reasons, the marja’-i-taqlid concludes that abortion is forbidden even if the woman is raped. Still, the person has an inner belief that the woman at the time has a right to abortion. C) According to religious reasons, the marja’-i-taqlid concludes that men have the right to inherit more than women. Still, the person has an inner belief that men and women have an equal right in inheritance. D) According to religious reasons, the marja’-i-taqlid concludes that women have no right to divorce, but the person has an inner belief that women have the right to divorce, like men.	
demographic questions	
Are you living in Qom? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Age:	Sex:
Marital status: Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>	
Level of education: Under high school <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor’s degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master’s degree <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>	
Kind of education: Seminary School <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Seminary School <input type="checkbox"/>	
Occupation: Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Housewife <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employment <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Clergyman <input type="checkbox"/>	

<input type="checkbox"/> Others	
Field of Study:	
Questions that aimed to assess the person's fidelity to Islamic main beliefs and practices	
1	Do you believe in God? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> I doubt <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Do you believe in Islam as a religion sent by God? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> I doubt <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Do you believe that there are special practical rules in Islam that a muslim must obey? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> I doubt <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Do you offer your daily prayers? Always <input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Do you fast during Ramadan? (Assuming that you do not have a specific illness or any other problem with fasting) Always <input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/>
Questions that aimed to assess the independent variable (the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules)	
Please choose one of the five options for each question according to your point of view.	
6	You can understand religious duties by reading verses and hadiths, and there is no need to be told by marja'-i-taqlid. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Before doing any action you are not aware of its religious duty, you should ask the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid or refer to his risalah. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
8	You should refer to the marja'-i-taqlid, even if you have a lot of jurisprudential and religious knowledge. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Before acting on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, you should understand why he gave such an opinion. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
10	If you disagree with marja'-i-taqlid's opinion because of your rational point of view, you can act on your own opinion; it means acting against the opinion of marja'-i-taqlid. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
11	If the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid is irrational for you, you conclude that he most likely misunderstood the word of God. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
12	In doing your religious duties, you should act more on your recognition, not marja'-i-taqlid's opinion. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
13	In finding religious duties, you can check the opinion of several marja'-i-taqlids and choose one of them; it means that you do not always have to refer to one marja'-i-taqlid. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
Questions that aimed to assess the dependent variable (acceptance of moral responsibility of individuals in the act of obeying religious rules)	
14	Before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, you have to make sure it does not contradict ethical rules. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
15	In significant issues such as human lives, before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, you have to research whether it is moral or not. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
16	If the marja'-i-taqlid considers an action as a lawful one, but you consider it morally wrong, you should not do it. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
17	If the marja'-i-taqlid considers an action as an obligatory one, but you consider it morally wrong, you should not do it. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
18	You acted according to marja'-i-taqlid's opinion, and then you realized that marja'-i-taqlid's opinion was a mistake. Although you have acted on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, it is up to you to

	compensate for that mistake. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
19	If you act on marja'-i-taqīd's opinion without research and his opinion is a mistake and Causes the violation of others' rights, you are guilty. Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling

For this study, a population was needed that included two different groups of samples; A group of believers in the religion who has more autonomy against the marja'-i-taqīd and a group of believers who has less autonomy. In this case, we can measure the effect of increasing and reducing autonomy by comparing these two groups' acceptance of moral responsibility. For this reason, the population of this study was considered to be the citizens of Qom, whose autonomy is disparate. Qom is a traditional and religious city, so naturally, there are individuals who believe in jurisprudential taqīd with low autonomy in Qom. On the other hand, according to the recent changes in Iran's society, there are individuals with high autonomy among Qom citizens, and research findings confirm this. So Qom citizens are a good population for such a study.

Among Qom citizens, individuals 20 – 49 years old were considered for sampling. Because it was predicted that people under 20 or older than 50 years could not imagine the contradiction between jurisprudential and moral rules exactly. According to the Statistical Center of Iran (1400 AHS) data related to the last headcount done in 1395 AHS, Qom had 615,235 citizens aged 20-49 years old.

We used the Cochran formula and Krejcie and Morgan Table to determine the number of samples. Since the population was more than 100,000, we needed 384 samples.

Because of the low research budget and preference for not bringing the study into the open (due to the political situation in Iran), we used the quota non-probability sampling method (See: Baker 1394 AHS:189). Considering age and sex factors according to the data offered by the Statistical Center of Iran, a quota table was prepared.

Table 2: Quota table

Group	The population of the group	The Ratio of Population to the Number of Samples (384)	The ratios are rounded off
Men at age 20-29	112,655	70.31381505	70
Men at age 30-39	121,135	75.60662186	76
Men at age 40-49	77,424	48.32432485	48
Women at age 20-29	114,905	71.71815648	72
Women at age 30-39	116,274	72.57262022	73
Women at age 40-49	72,842	45.46446155	45
Total			384

In addition to the three age groups listed in the table above and gender, the neighborhood factor was also considered. In other words, the sample groups were divided into three, and the questionnaires were filled in three different neighborhoods of Qom. The difference between the selected neighborhoods was in the presence of religious or non-religious people in them.

Validity of the Questionnaire

Since the questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and had not been used before, five scholars in the fields of ethics, jurisprudence, and sociology supervised the process of determining the factors, sentences, and the whole questionnaire.

Also, twenty questionnaires were filled in first, and the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by presenting the results to SPSS software using Cronbach's alpha test. The results were above 0.7, which is considered acceptable.

Editing was done once based on the first twenty samples and the reaction of the respondents to the sentences, and after filling in one-third of the questionnaires, it was re-edited again. The ambiguous sentences in the respondents' eyes were edited in these two steps.

Research Findings

Data related to demographic questions are deleted to prevent the article from lengthening. Here, the answers of the samples to the main questions that assess the two research variables are presented in the form of tables below. See the full version of the research for complete data.

Answers to questions related to the independent variable (the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules):

Table 3: Answers to the sentence “You can understand religious duties by reading verses and hadiths, and there is no need to be told by marja’-i-taqlid.”

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	47	12.2	12.2
	Agree	108	28.1	40.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	43	11.2	51.6
	Disagree	141	36.7	88.3
	Strongly disagree	45	11.7	100.0
Total		384	100.0	

Table 4: Answers to the sentence “Before doing any action which you are not aware of its religious duty, you should ask the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid or refer to his risalah.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	37	9.6	9.7	9.7
	Agree	207	53.9	54.0	63.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	4.7	4.7	68.4
	Disagree	78	20.3	20.4	88.8
	Strongly disagree	43	11.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	383	99.7	100.0	
No answer		1	0.3		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 5: Answers to the sentence, “You should refer to the marja’-i-taqlid, even if you have a lot of jurisprudential and religious knowledge.”

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	34	8.9	8.9
	Agree	158	41.1	50.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	22	5.7	55.7
	Disagree	123	32.0	87.8
	Strongly disagree	47	12.2	100.0
	Total	384	100.0	

Table 6: Answers to the sentence, “Before acting on the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid, you should understand why he gave such an opinion.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	79	20.6	20.6	20.6
	Agree	151	39.3	39.4	60.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	15	3.9	3.9	64.0
	Disagree	123	32.0	32.1	96.1
	Strongly disagree	15	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	383	99.7	100.0	
No answer		1	0.3		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 7: Answers to the sentence “If you disagree with the marja’-i-taqlid’s opinion because of your rational point of view, you can act on your own opinion; it means to act against the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	70	18.2	18.3	18.3
	Agree	143	37.2	37.3	55.6
	Neither agree nor	23	6.0	6.0	61.6

	disagree				
	Disagree	114	29.7	29.8	91.4
	Strongly disagree	33	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	383	99.7	100.0	
	No answer	1	0.3		
	Total	384	100.0		

Table 8: Answers to the sentence “If the opinion of the marja‘-i-taqlid is irrational for you, you conclude that he most likely misunderstood the word of God.”

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	72	18.8	18.8
	Agree	117	30.5	49.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	54	14.1	63.3
	Disagree	124	32.3	95.6
	Strongly disagree	17	4.4	100.0
	Total	384	100.0	

Table 9: Answers to the sentence, “In doing your religious duties, you should act more on your own recognition, not on marja‘-i-taqlid’s opinion.”

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	53	13.8	13.8
	Agree	95	24.7	38.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	34	8.9	47.4
	Disagree	178	46.4	93.8
	Strongly disagree	24	6.3	100.0
	Total	384	100.0	

Table 10: Answers to the sentence “In finding religious duties, you can check the opinion of several marja‘-i-taqlids and choose one of them; it means that you do not always have to refer to one marja‘-i-taqlid.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	54	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Agree	117	30.5	30.5	44.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	3.4	3.4	48.0
	Disagree	171	44.5	44.6	92.7
	Strongly disagree	28	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	383	99.7	100.0	
	No answer	1	0.3		
	Total	384	100.0		

Answers to questions related to the dependent variable (acceptance of moral responsibility of individuals in the act of obeying religious rules):

Table 11: Answers to the sentence, “Before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja‘-i-taqlid, you have to make sure it does not contradict ethical rules.”

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	77	20.1	20.1
	Agree	179	46.6	66.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	4.4	71.1
	Disagree	91	23.7	94.8
	Strongly disagree	20	5.2	100.0
	Total	384	100.0	

Table 12: Answers to the sentence “In significant issues such as human lives, before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja’-i-taqīd, you have to research whether it is moral or not.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	94	24.5	24.6	24.6
	Agree	194	50.5	50.8	75.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	3.6	3.7	79.1
	Disagree	63	16.4	16.5	95.5
	Strongly disagree	17	4.4	4.5	100.0
	Total	382	99.5	100.0	
No answer		2	0.5		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 13: Answers to the sentence, “If the marja’-i-taqīd considers an action as a lawful one, but you consider it morally wrong, you should not do it.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	82	21.4	21.4	21.4
	Agree	174	45.3	45.4	66.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	3.4	3.4	70.2
	Disagree	92	24.0	24.0	94.3
	Strongly disagree	22	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	383	99.7	100.0	
No answer		1	0.3		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 14: Answers to the sentence “If the marja’-i-taqīd considers an action as an obligatory one, but you consider it is morally wrong, you should not do it.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	72	18.8	18.9	18.9
	Agree	136	35.4	35.7	54.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	3.1	3.1	57.7
	Disagree	125	32.6	32.8	90.6
	Strongly disagree	36	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	381	99.2	100.0	
No answer		3	0.8		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 15: Answers to the sentence “You acted according to the marja’-i-taqīd’s opinion, and then you realized that marja’-i-taqīd’s opinion was a mistake. Although you have acted on the opinion of the marja’-i-taqīd, it is up to you to compensate for that mistake.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	49	12.8	12.9	12.9
	Agree	99	25.8	26.1	39.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	3.4	3.4	42.5
	Disagree	184	47.9	48.5	91.0
	Strongly disagree	34	8.9	9.0	100.0
	Total	379	98.7	100.0	
No answer		5	1.3		
Total		384	100.0		

Table 16: Answers to the sentence “If you act on the marja’-i-taqlid’s opinion without research and his opinion is a mistake and Cause the violation of others’ rights, you are guilty.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Measure	Strongly agree	65	16.9	17.2	17.2
	Agree	131	34.1	34.6	51.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	11	2.9	2.9	54.6
	Disagree	150	39.1	39.6	94.2
	Strongly disagree	22	5.7	5.8	100.0
Total		379	98.7	100.0	
No answer		5	1.3		
Total		384	100.0		

Analysis of Research Findings

After comparing the responses to questions about independent and dependent variables and calculations according to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the following result is obtained:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no relationship between the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules and their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a relationship between the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules and their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules.

Table 17: Pearson correlation test

		The acceptance of moral responsibility of individuals in the act of obeying religious rules
The autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules	The size of the Pearson correlation	0.814
	Significance level	0.000
	Sample size	384

The above table includes the Pearson correlation test, which assesses the relationship between the first and second variables. According to the significance level (sig [2-tailed] = 0.000 < 0/05), the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

More expansion about how the research hypothesis is confirmed, as there were two kinds of sentences in the questionnaire. The first kinds are eight sentences (questions 6-13, table no. 1) that measure the amount of sample autonomy. The way a sample answers these sentences clarifies his/her amount of autonomy. These sentences are:

“Sentence No. 1: You can understand religious duties by reading verses and hadiths, and there is **no** need to be told by marja’-i-taqlid.”Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy because they believe in their independence in understanding the religious sources and reasons. The second group of samples who disagree with the sentence have less autonomy. A muqallid disagrees with this sentence because he does not know himself/herself as an able person to understand religious rules from the Quran and Sunnah.

“Sentence No. 2: Before doing any action you are **not** aware of its religious duty, you should ask the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid or refer to his risalah.”Samples who disagree with this sentence have more autonomy because they believe in their independence in doing different things and do not need to refer to the mujtahid's opinions in every action. In contrast, samples who agree with this sentence have less autonomy. A muqallid agrees with this sentence because he/she considers him/herself obliged to ask the mujtahid’s opinion in every action.

“Sentence No. 3: You should refer to the marja’-i-taqlid, even if you have a lot of jurisprudential and religious knowledge.”Samples who disagree with this sentence have more autonomy because they believe in their independence in understanding, at least when they have a lot of jurisprudential and religious knowledge about a unique problem. In contrast, samples who agree with this sentence reduce their autonomy to the lowest level. Because even though they have a lot of jurisprudential and religious knowledge, they do not know their understanding enough to not refer to the mujtahid. Of course, a muqallid agrees with the sentence.

“Sentence No. 4: Before acting on the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid, you **should** understand why he gave such an opinion.”Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy. Because their own understanding of the reason for the religious rules is essential for them, this means that they would not follow the rules blindly without understanding their reason. In contrast, samples who disagree with this sentence have less autonomy.

They follow the marja'-i-taqlid even if they do not know his opinion's reason. Muqallids are in this group because according to the teaching of taqlid, there is no need for understanding the rules' reason.

"Sentence No. 5: If you disagree with marja'-i-taqlid's opinion because of your rational point of view, you can act on your own opinion; it means acting **against** the opinion of marja'-i-taqlid." Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy because their own rational point of view is essential for them, no matter if they agree with marja'-i-taqlid or not, unlike the samples who disagree with this sentence and have less autonomy. Opponents of the sentence ignore their own rational thinking. They follow the marja'-i-taqlid anyway. Muqallids are in this group because they should be submissive and have no right to make negative comments.

"Sentence No. 6: If the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid is **irrational** for you, you conclude that he most likely misunderstood the word of God." Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy because they trust their rational understanding more. So if the mujtahid's opinion is against their rational understanding, they do not doubt their idea but think that the mujtahid's opinion is wrong. In contrast, opponents of the sentence think that the probability of mujtahid error is less than themselves. So they do not place a high value on their own understanding and reduce their autonomy. Muqallids are in this group because, in the teaching of taqlid, the rational opposition from muqallids have no effect.

"Sentence No. 7: In doing your religious duties, you should act more on your recognition, **not** marja'-i-taqlid's opinion." Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy, obviously because they believe that acting on their own recognition is correct. In contrast, opponents of the sentence think that when they want to act on religious rules, their recognition does not have any value. So they have less autonomy. Muqallids are in this group because their recognition is not essential in the teaching of taqlid.

"Sentence No. 8: In finding religious duties, you can check the opinion of several marja'-i-taqlids and choose one of them; it means that you do **not** always have to refer to one marja'-i-taqlid." Samples who agree with this sentence have more autonomy because they believe that they can recognize the correct idea among different mujtahids' opinions. They place value on their own recognition. In contrast, opponents of the sentence always follow a special marja'-i-taqlid and do not even respect their autonomy to choose another mujtahid's idea. Muqallids are in this group most of the time because most of the muqallids follow a special marja'-i-taqlid.

It is not jurisprudential research to say which answers to the questions are right or wrong. We only want to describe the situation of the samples in order to examine its effect on the second variable. Their amount of autonomy is clarified according to their kinds of answers. Some samples answer in a way that shows they have a high level of autonomy. Some others are at an average level, and finally, some samples have the lowest level of autonomy.

In the continuation of the questionnaire, the second group of sentences (questions 14-19, table no. 1) measures a sample's acceptance of responsibility. I will explain the way these sentences relate to the acceptance of moral responsibility:

"Sentence No. 9: Before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, you **have** to make sure it does not contradict ethical rules." Samples who agree with this sentence have more acceptance of moral responsibility. Because it is crucial for them not to act against moral rules, they should ensure this. In contrast, opponents of the sentence ignore breaking the moral rules; they accept their responsibility less.

"Sentence No. 10: In significant issues such as human lives, before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, you **have** to research whether it is moral or not." This sentence is similar to the previous one except that here it is emphasized that the issue is at a high level of importance according to morality, e.g., human lives are in danger. Samples who do not believe that investigation is necessary even in such important issues and disagree with the sentence have less acceptance of moral responsibility. In contrast, those who agree with the sentence more accept moral responsibility.

"Sentence No. 11: If the marja'-i-taqlid considers an action as a lawful one, but you consider it morally wrong, you **should not** do it." Samples who agree with the sentence have more acceptance of moral responsibility. They do not pay attention that the marja'-i-taqlid knows an action as permissible; they abandon it if they find it in contrast with morality. In contrast, opponents of the sentence ignore moral obligations and have less acceptance of moral responsibility. The marja'-i-taqlid's license is enough for them.

"Sentence No. 12: If the marja'-i-taqlid considers an action as an obligatory one, but you consider it is morally wrong, you **should not** do it." This sentence is similar to the previous one, except it is at a higher level. Samples who agree with the sentence have more acceptance of moral responsibility. If they conclude that an action is forbidden morally, they will leave it even if the marja'-i-taqlid knows the action as obligatory. They prioritize moral judgment. In contrast, opponents of the sentence have less acceptance of moral responsibility.

"Sentence No. 13: You acted according to marja'-i-taqlid's opinion, and then you realized that marja'-i-taqlid's opinion was a mistake. Although you have acted on the opinion of the marja'-i-taqlid, it is up to you to

compensate for that mistake.” This sentence measures the acceptance of moral responsibility after an action. A person who accepts his/her responsibility after an action is accountable for his/her actions and is ready to admit and correct their mistakes. In contrast, opponents of the sentence do not admit their mistakes.

“Sentence No. 14: If you act on marja’-i-taqlid’s opinion without research and his opinion is a mistake and Causes the violation of others’ rights, you are guilty.” This sentence is similar to the previous one, except it is at a higher level. Because it emphasizes that the sample’s action has led to a violation of people’s rights, which is significant, it means that a usual mistake has not been made. Samples who agree with the sentence have more acceptance of moral responsibility and blame themselves. In contrast, opponents of the sentence blame the marja’-i-taqlid for their own actions.

But how are the two groups of sentences connected? According to the research findings (table no. 17), samples with less autonomy based on their answers to the first group of sentences are exactly the samples who accept their moral responsibility less based on their answers to the second group of sentences. In other words, research data proved a correlation in survey samples between two variables; it means between the autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules and their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules. In this way, with increasing or decreasing the amount of autonomy, acceptance of moral responsibility also increases or decreases. Since taqlid leads to a decrease in individuals’ autonomy, this result is achieved that acceptance of the taqlid leads to the reduction in the acceptance of moral responsibility of the samples. As mentioned in the explanation of sentences, samples who accepted the teaching of taqlid should choose answers in a way that shows less autonomy. Because they know marja’-i-taqlid as responsible for recognizing good and bad, they have less independence. Because they think the marja’-i-taqlid is responsible for all the mistakes. Therefore these muqallids are who accept less moral responsibility according to less autonomy. It was the hypothesis that we intended to prove.

To understand the topic’s significance, see the responses to sentences such as “In significant issues such as human lives, before the act of obeying religious duties on the opinion of the marja’-i-taqlid, you have to research whether it is moral or not” (Table 12). 20.8 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the mentioned sentence. In other words, these people do not even desire to do any moral investigation of the religious rules in cases when the lives of humans are in danger, and they act on the marja’-i-taqlid opinion without any hesitation. Most people who disagree with this sentence are the same people who, according to the first variable, have low autonomy in referring to the marja’-i-taqlid. Also, 44.8% of the samples disagreed or strongly disagreed with the sentence, “If you act on the marja’-i-taqlid’s opinion without research and his opinion is a mistake and Cause the violation of others rights, you are guilty” (Table 16). Although, in accordance with the assumption of the sentence, their actions clearly violated the right of others, they do not blame themselves.

The research only shows the correlation between two variables. We did not set a goal to find the reason for this relationship; i.e., we did not want to know why the autonomy reduction of muqallid leads to a reduction of moral responsibility acceptance. But I can present a guess in this regard. It could be considered a hypothesis for other research. I guess that one of the most critical factors here is that muqallids put their moral consciousness or intuition aside and do not use it anymore.

More explanation is that all human beings have inner moral knowledge that philosophers discussed under the titles of intuition and conscience (See: Sliwa 2017). Even some Quranic verses refer to this human characteristic (The Quran, Sura 91:8). Although individuals’ moral consciousness is a little different, almost all of them accept some moral rules, like this: “don’t kill an innocent person.” This ability helps us not make terrible mistakes in different life situations.

Islamic jurisprudence covers all areas of life. According to jurists, every person’s action has special verdicts (Kāshif ul-Ghiṭā’ n.d.:76). It means that marja’-i-taqlid has a unique practical rule for all situations of the muqallid life. As a result, she/he loses her/his autonomy to recognize right and wrong in life and put his/her moral consciousness aside. Our moral responsibility is based on our ability to recognize good and bad; without considering moral consciousness, responsibility is meaningless. So the muqallids who put their moral consciousness aside deny their responsibility.

Conclusion

The analysis of the research finding has been presented in detail. Overall, it has been concluded that there is a significant correlation between the “autonomy of individuals in finding the religious rules” as an independent variable and “their acceptance of moral responsibility in the act of obeying religious rules” as a dependent variable. It means that the research hypothesis was proved.

Research Limitations

Finally, it is appropriate to mention the limitations of this survey honestly to provide opportunities for better research. Refer to the full version of the research to view the whole limitations.

The first limitation is that a non-probability sampling method has been used instead of probability sampling because of the low budget. Although quota sampling is a non-probability method similar to probability stratified sampling, its finding is not generalizable because samples are not completely probability (See: Baker 1394 AHS: 189). Although the research finding is not generalizable to all Qom citizens, it can be accepted as an exploratory study that supports the hypothesis and opens the way for better and more complete surveys (ibid: 188).

The second limitation of the research is the complexity or ambiguity of some sentences for many individuals, especially low-educated samples. Some samples had a different understanding of the sentences. Several effective actions were taken to overcome the limitation that you can find in the full research version. For example, all of the questionnaires were presented by own self to samples. It means, to prevent ambiguity and different understanding, replacing filling in the questionnaire with samples, except for a few samples, I expressed the introductory text of the questionnaire and asked questions one by one. If needed, I explained the sentences and recorded the answer.

The third limitation of the research was that samples were predicted to hide their actual beliefs and lie according to the Iran particular situation. I tried not to face the samples when I had a religious or even ordinary appearance to overcome this limitation. In addition, I emphasized that I am a student, and they would not be identifiable. I spoke friendly with most samples; so many of them opened their hearts to me or joked with me. It seems that I overcame the third limitation. Because many samples answered completely autonomous against the marja'-i-taqlid, and if they were afraid of expressing their actual beliefs, they would not respond like this.

I hope that these efforts have led to more accurate research data, but in any case, there is no investigation without limitations. Future researchers will correct these defects as much as possible.

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Appendix
Transliteration system

Symbol	Transliteration		Symbol	Transliteration	
ء	’		ف	F	f
ب	B	b	ق	Q	q
ت	T	t	ك	K	k
ث	Th	th	ل	L	l
ج	J	j	م	M	m
ح	Ḥ	ḥ	ن	N	n
خ	Kh	kh	و	W	w
د	D	d	ه	H	h
ذ	Dh	dh	ی	Y	y
ر	R	r	ة	h or t	
ز	Z	z	Long Vowels	Transliteration	
س	S	s	ای	Ī	ī
ش	Sh	sh	او	Ū	ū
ص	Ṣ	ṣ	آ	Ā	ā
ض	Ḍ	ḍ	Short Vowels	Transliteration	
ط	Ṭ	ṭ	أ	U	u
ظ	Ẓ	ẓ	إ	A	a
ع	‘		إ	I	i
غ	Gh	gh			