

Religious Orientation and Development of Pro- Social Behavior in Young Female Students

Shamaila Asad¹, Samia Khalid², Sadaf Rehman³, Maham Abdullah²**Abstract**

Religious orientation is an attitude toward religion or religious practices or an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs. As religion emphasizes moral codes designed to instill values such as helping, caring, emotional support and empathy in humans so, the study was designed to investigate the relationship between religious orientation and pro-social behavior of young female students. The study also examines the predicting role of religious orientation in the development of prosocial behavior in young female students. The non-probability purposive sampling technique has been used with correlational research design in order to collect data. Analysis was conducted on SPSS by using sample of $N=150$ young female students with age ranged 20-26 years ($M=23.50$, $SD=3.43$). The results showed religious orientation had significant positive association with pro-social behavior ($r=.40$, $p>.00$) in young female students. Meanwhile, the findings revealed that religious orientation was a significant positive predictor of prosocial behavior in young female students. The study implies that such types of religious orientation will develop more awareness in youth of the present era about the development of prosocial behaviors like charity and help to the needy.

Key Words: Religious Orientation, Pro-social Behavior, Young Females, College Students

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Introduction

The aim of the present study was to find out the association between religious orientation and development of prosocial behaviors in

young female students. Religion plays very vital role in human life. The definition of religion is diverse, emphasizing different elements of religion. Some defined religiosity as one's beliefs and practices linked to a religious association or to God (Durkheim & Swain, 2008). The meaning of religiosity can be considered for a number of issues like marital issues, environmental issues, social issues and economic issues. It includes religious faith and customs. Miller and Thoresen (2003) found religiosity being implemented through religious faith and customs. Religiosity is connected to the institutional association and attachments, loyalty to ethical belief, trust or faith and taking part in customary presence in mass or lone performance of holy ritual practice (Boswell & Boswell-Ford, 2010; Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

Faith is a minor force to help hang out with school as well as peers, while family is considered to be the major one. Religion can

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mould childhood performance by stirring their faith, approach and actions with the help of instruments of social management, social grasp and principles or identity (Chamratrithirong et al., 2010). Religion, in all psychological theories like Freud's analytic perspective viewed religion as the unconscious mind's need for wish fulfilment. Because people need to feel secure and absolve themselves of their own guilt, Freud believed that they choose to believe in GOD (Clarke & Byrne, 1993). According to prosocial deeds, every religion is formed by the holy entity. Individuals are inclined to support others with financial assistance and charity (Douglas & Michael, 2017). Religion supports individuals bearing the awful aspects of their selfish requirements and also strengthened and penalised, to protect the communal and ethical criteria (Johnson et al., 2003).

Hypothetically, civilised conduct shows a wide group of performances, commonly done to do well to others, being the trait of societal ability in youth. These voluntary performances include numerous assistance, from physical to psychological, like lending a hand to others in emergency and also in harmony; sharing, calming, saving, giving time, effort, or funds; helping; and ending supportive form of actions instead of confronting (Williams, 2007).

Lots of reasons explain why religiosity controls youth's pro-social behavior. Religion is a type of communal resource, depends on the communal checks, strengthens pro-social manners, and penalise for selfishness. Religious connection or religious significance is completely associated to unselfishness and support (Furrow et al., 2004; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Smith & Denton, 2005). The research showed religiosity as a significant performer of youth actions. Young adults with religious orientation are connected to more common freelance jobs (Schneider et al., 2004). The

connection between religiosity and pro-social deeds might vary due to the religious belief of individuals. Religious routes are found to be of three types: persons with non-fundamental religious inclination consider religion as a reason to other ends e.g. social status. People with intrinsic fundamental religious course see religion to be the essentially beautiful end limit; and the ones with the mission for religious orientation see religion as the procedure concerned in finding and re-investigating standards and values (Batson & Grey, 1981).

Earlier works, analysing pro-social conduct, as reported voluntarily or in response to the request for information, confirm intrinsic religiosity may predict helping behavior better than extrinsic religiosity. It can be described that non-fundamental religiosity means achieving additional social and personal gains, in comparison to an individual's religious devotion, while fundamental religiosity depends on a spiritual system that manoeuvres one's deeds (Hansen et al., 1995). Later, mutual disciplinary reasons for constructive development in youth have considered religious engagement to be helpful in promoting constructive deeds and reducing threatening deeds (Scales & Leffert, 2004).

Religiosity was associated with a gentle role (e.g., altruism, kindness, helping, pro-social behavior) in youth (Francis et al., 2004). Educated through most religious principles, relaxation and sympathy with others, religiosity shows deep helpful influence on the pro-social deeds of younger people. Generally, religious persons have a stronger prosocial approach, as the majority of religious bodies emphasize on initiating unselfish acts. Most of the researches that analysed the commonalities between religiosity and pro-social behavior, establish intense association of religiosity with pro-social conduct (Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

Another point of view on faith is that it explicitly gives confidence to youth. Religious orientation and practices are the matters that trigger adolescents to take action; this means that faith inspires actions in youth directly (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, faith is the social check that forces youth in time, toward traditional values with social and permissible standards, pressurises youth to connect others (e.g., family & friends) with traditional values (Bahr et al., 1993). Similarly, religious orientation is the instrument that motivates youth to pursue or maintain the social and permissible standards of the family and peers. In short, all of these perceptions portray faith being responsible for youth performance through the system of social strength and social education. As concluded by Kyoung (2010), the connection between religious gathering by parents and civilised manners and mutual pursuit were completely arbitrated by religious characteristics. Whereas, uniqueness of faith, somehow balanced the connection between religious meets by friends, congregation supporting conduct and ability of peers. With unfamiliar and more frequent religious meetings by parents, youths with little religious independence showed elevated troubled behaviour. Researchers have scrutinised the belief that religion restricts self-centred actions and encourages teamwork. Religiosity is definitely connected to sociable performance. Individuals felt themselves to be precious and more accomplished in their religious faiths, directing them to take part in deeds that enhance their stages of self-actualization, together with socially friendly deeds and religious activities (Bonner et al., 2003). The study by Wenger (2004) established that people identified measures, conveying religiousness more swiftly, when they are led by the religious concepts. Furthermore, investigated self-identified religious and non-religious participants, to identify the

dissimilarities in quantity of amounts dispensed in worldly charities. Their outcomes showed minute dissimilarities in amounts dispensed by religious and non-religious people (Eckel & Grossman, 2004). Another study designed by Sprecher and Fehr (2005) found that it was concerned love that was positively connected with pro-social behavior, and that those who were religious felt more concerned love than those who were not. On the other hand, deep love for common individuals and aliens that was associated with free supportive approach; brought them close to each other as well as close to the human race. They assumed that perhaps humans must have a direct emotional deal in those who will benefit from their pro social behavior. Bulbulia and Mahoney (2008) found that religious people are considerably more trusting and charitable in their contacts with fellow religious people than nonreligious people. Other studies have found that belonging to the same faith improves people's perceptions of one another, which could explain why the outcomes of economic games indicate high levels of trust and altruism.

When pro social behavior is being recognized and appreciated, it is more likely to occur because participants felt like they were getting something in return for their act of pro social behavior (Grant & Gino 2010). Religiosity is as one's beliefs and practice linked to a religious association or to God. Research indicates that the high value individual gives to his/her religion is connected with pro social behavior. It shows that religiosity is always linked with pro social behavior (Saroglou, 2013). Genetic effects may also contribute to individual differences in pro-sociality. There is considerable confirmation for the heritability of prosocial behavior and empathy (Knafo et al., 2011).

Studies have shown positive association between religiosity and aspects of an

individual's behavior and attitudes. Youngsters from religiously oriented families have high values and are connected with prosocial behavior. A recent meta-analysis found that while the effects of religious primes reliably enlarged the pro-sociality of people correlated as being high in religiosity, such primes did not reliably affect less religious people, suggesting that the effects of these primes were really due to their religious contact (Sheriff & Norenzayan, 2007)). Religious people are often seen as better people, however, their behavior is not actually any better than others. But for the most part, it has been argued and statistically proven that religion does impact different parts of an individual's life. There may be a difference between being religious and being religiously oriented. Religious orientation is positively predicted by kindness and altruistic behavior and priming religious concepts especially the spiritual prime can increase pro-social behaviors (Batara et al., 2016).

In Pakistan, Ahmed (2009) determined that the students who went to the religious school donated more than those students who did not go to the religious school. Ismail and Desmukh (2012) conducted a study to explore religious get-togethers, presence and well-being of men and women whose age range was 16 to 80 years. It was concluded that religiosity and well-being have positive relationships with different aspects of psychological well-being. Another study investigated association among altruism, belief and religiosity in young adults. Strong positive relationship was found among these variables. Gender differences were also investigated which showed that men had more altruism than women (Beutal & Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, a study suggested as positive contribution of religiosity and religious education in enhancing moral behaviors of young adults. Wasim and Siddique (2020) identified a

positive relationship between religiosity and pro-social behavior of employees. Overall review of literature suggested a positive relationship between religious orientation and prosocial behavior. In this study, researchers are interested in identifying this relation in young women studying in university. Studies have shown positive association between religiosity and aspects of an individual's behavior and attitudes. Youngsters from religiously oriented families have high values and connected with pro social behavior.

Method

A quantitative research was conducted to find out the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behaviors in young female students. The sample ($N=150$) were recruited from different disciplines of a local private university of Lahore (English language and literature, Clinical Psychology department, Human Resource management programs) via non-probability purposive sampling technique. All participants were students of master level with age ranged 20-26 ($M_{age}=23.50$). Self-constructed demographic assessment, religious orientation scale, developed by Allport and Ross (1967), consisted of 14-items were used. Religious Orientation Scale has three sub scale factors as Intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale, Extrinsic Social Religious Orientation and Extrinsic Personal Religious Orientation Scale. Reliabilities for the Religious Orientation sub scales are as Intrinsic=.83, Extrinsic social=.58 and Extrinsic personal=.83. Pro-social tendencies measure-revised (PTM-R), developed by Carlo and Randall (2005), consisted of 21 items and participants responded to each statement according to a 5-point Likert-type scale. The PTM-R was used to measure pro social behaviour, independently assessing the six different types of pro social tendencies: public, anonymous, compliant, altruism, emotional,

and dire. The .75 is the reliability of revised pro social tendencies measure. Foremost, a pilot study ($n=20$) was conducted on female students of different institutes of a private university of Lahore which determined that the present project is feasible and also an

opportunity to publish its results. However, the data of 150 participants was retained for this research study. Participants were enquired about their religious orientation and development of pro-social behaviours through questionnaires.

Results

Demographics of the participants are consisted of age, marital status, family system, and relationship with their parents and siblings, involvement in social, religious and other groups. The mean age of the participants was 21.73 with standard deviation 3.43. Unmarried participants were 88.7% and married 11.3% and they belonged to nuclear (66.7%) and joint

(33.3%) family systems. They had very good relationship with their mothers (44.0%), father (39.3%) and excellent with their siblings (41.3%). Mostly participants had not joined the social groups (54.0%) but many participants had joined (46.7%) whereas (43.3%) participants had joined religious groups and other (56.7%) participants had not joined religious groups.

Table 1

Psychometric Properties of Questionnaires (N=150)

| Variables | K | M | SD | Range | α |
|-----------------------|----|------|------|-------|----------|
| Religious Orientation | 14 | 3.78 | .438 | 3-5 | .72 |
| Pro-social Behaviors | 21 | 3.58 | .523 | 2-5 | .79 |

Note. k = total no. of items, M = mean, SD = standard deviation, Min = minimum score, Max = maximum score, α = Cronbach's alpha

Table 1 Shows psychometric properties of the scales used in present study. The results show coefficient of Religious Orientation

Scale $\alpha = .72$ and Prosocial Behaviors scale $\alpha = .79$ which indicated that both scales are moderate reliability.

Table 2

Pearson Product Correlation among Study Variables of Religious Orientation and Development of Prosocial Behaviors (N=150)

| Variables | N | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------------|-----|------|-----|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Religious Orientation | 150 | 3.78 | .43 | - | .37** | .32** | .32** | .23** | .11 | .39** |
| 2. Pro-social behaviours | 150 | 3.58 | .52 | | - | .77** | .86** | .70** | .63** | .72** |
| 3. P.S.H | 150 | 3.62 | .66 | | | - | .56** | .49** | .32** | .44** |
| 4. P.S.C | 150 | 3.69 | .59 | | | | - | .54** | .52** | .56** |
| 5. P.S. E.C | 150 | 3.38 | .74 | | | | | - | .32** | .38** |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|------|-----|---|-------|
| 6.P.S.C.E | 150 | 3.63 | .65 | - | .41** |
| 7.P.S.E.D | 150 | 3.46 | .80 | - | - |

Note. **= $p < 0.01$, *= $p < 0.05$, N = total no. of participants, M = mean, SD = standard deviation, P.S.H= Prosocial-Helping, P.S.C=Prosocial-Caring, P.S.E.C=Prosocial-Emotional Contagion, P.S.C.E=Prosocial- Cognitive Empathy, P.S.E.D=Prosocial-Emotional Disconnection.

Table 2 demonstrates bivariate correlation to identify the relationship between study variables. Results concluded significant positive correlation between religious orientation and development of prosocial behaviours in young female students ($p < .01$, $p < .05$) which means that the young females have religious orientation they are

developing prosocial behaviors in themselves. Further, findings revealed that religious orientation also has significant positive relationship with all the sub domains of prosocial behaviors of helping, Caring, Emotional Contagion, Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Disconnection.

Table 3

Regression Coefficient of Religious Orientation on Pro-Social Behaviour (N=150)

| Variable | Model | | | 95% CI | |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | <i>B</i> | β | <i>SE</i> | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> |
| Constant | 1.90*** | | .35 | 1.21 | 2.58 |
| Religious Orientation | .44 | .37 | .09 | .26 | .62 |
| R^2 | .14 | | | | |
| ΔR^2 | .14 | | | | |
| <i>P</i> | .000 | | | | |

Note. $N=150$, $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$, B = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient, β = Standardized Regression Coefficient, ΔR^2 =Change in R^2 , CI =Confidence Interval.

In Table 3, it was examined the impact of religious orientation on the development of prosocial behaviors in young female students. Results revealed that religious orientation is a significant predictor of the development of prosocial behaviors. The one

predictor model was found to be significant ($F(1,148) = 23.997$, $p < .000$). The model explains 14.0% of variance (adjusted $R^2 = .14$) in development of prosocial behaviors. The value of R^2 change is 13.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine the association between religious orientation and development of prosocial behaviors in young female students. Results indicated positive relationship between religious orientation and pro social behavior. Previous research also suggests that religion is a type of communal resource, depends on the communal checks, strengthens pro-social

manners, and penalises for selfishness (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Religious orientation and pro social behaviors are positively related as religion promotes pro-social behavior, religion defines our cultural norms, boundaries and a whole lifestyle. One more explanation of pro social behavior is that people with religious or spiritual beliefs are met with a situation of emergency; they feel driven to help if they believe they are being

watched by a natural power (Rossano, 2007). Another study observed the relation between religion orientation and pro social behavior and found that learners who went to religious discipline provided more than those who did not go to religious discipline (Ahmed, 2009). People are motivated according to their religious practices and favour to do which they are practiced in their religion. Obviously, the reasons for contributing in religiosity acts are practices and connected to faith. James (1994) argued that the holy figure of any religion creates pro social behavior; individuals are mostly like to facilitate persons in form of charity and donation. Skinner (1969) suggested that religious values gives reinforcement in form of punishment or reward which defend communal and moral standards. Religious texts also give us the messages to facilitate and concern to others. Studies show that pro-social behavior refers to a broad category of activities performed with the aim of helping others, and it is a sign of social competence in childhood and adolescence. It is represented by such “self-sacrifice,” a lack of regard for personal needs, or commitment to others, all of which contribute positively to humanitarian ethical assessment, despite the fact that it is costly to the individual (Bekkers & de Graaf, 2005; Wentzel et al., 2007). These unpaid behaviors include a wide range of practical and emotional support activities, such as assisting others in both emergency and non-emergency situations; sharing, soothing, saving, contributing time, effort, or money; volunteering; and supporting rather than demanding behavior (Williams, 2007). Randolph-Seng and Nielsen (2007) verified that people primed with religious words cheated significantly less on a successive task. Sheriff and Norenzayan (2007) also found that priming people with religious word made them more altruistic and charitable.

Another finding of present study suggested that religious orientation is predictor of prosocial behavior. These findings are in line with the findings of Batara et al. (2016). They suggested religiosity and prosocial behavior were positively associated. Religiosity was positively predicted by kindness (prosocial behavior). Priming religious beliefs, particularly the spiritual prime, has also been suggested as a way to boost prosocial behavior. According to a recent meta-analysis, while religious primes predictably increased pro sociality in those who were strong in religiosity, they did not reliably affect less religious people, implying that the effects of these primes were attributable to their religious interaction. Spiritual development, according to Benson et al. (2003), is the process of increasing one's natural human capacity for self-transcendence, in which anyone is rooted in something bigger than self, such as the sacred. The search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution is propelled by this developmental 'engine.' Women and men differ in how much and when they give when it comes to altruism in the form of giving (Andreoni & Vesterland, 2001). They devised an experiment in which participants were asked to distribute money tokens to an unknown person. Women were more charitable than men when it was relatively costly to give, according to their findings. In another study which describes that women are more alarmed in helping out than men conducted by Fiala et al. (1999). The impact of beliefs and gender roles on assisting behavior was investigated. They discovered that when males were in non-masculine situations, women were significantly more prone to aid than when they were in macho situations. Regardless of the gender of the individual in need, men were more willing to assist in masculine situations. Males and females were asked to rate themselves as self-oriented (egoistic) or

other-oriented in a study done by Barnett (2000). While more females regarded other oriented motives as more comparable to their own, there were no statistically significant differences in this regard. Although both males and females agreed that altruistic impulses should promote helping behavior, both expressed scepticism regarding altruistic behaviour between strangers.

Limitations and Recommendations

Qualitative analysis should have been incorporated to explore in depth phenomena's like religious orientation and development of prosocial behavior. Longitudinal studies can provide more authentic information. Development of indigenous scale for both variables can also help in exploring actual picture of the matter.

Implications

The present findings suggest that religious orientation may help to promote prosocial behavior by fostering religious orientation in youth as religious orientation provides moral directives to guide their lives. The better understanding of the mechanism involved, regarding prosocial values development in youth, may provide useful guidance to parents, schools, community leaders and policy makers.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by authors.

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