

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION, PAKISTANI MUSLIMS' POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

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Abstract

The relationship between religion and political engagement in Pakistan was the subject of the current study. Political engagement is very important for political stability and the dynamism of societies. Throughout the various stages of a society's development process, the necessity of youth participation has been given serious consideration. It is clear how important political conduct is when it is regarded as a strategy in national strategic planning to enhance controlled public engagement in decision-making processes. The sample of this study is 400 young adults (18-25 years; 175 males and 225 females; M = 19.5; SD = .49) selected by convenience sampling. The Muslim Religious Orientation Scale (MROS; Anwar et al., 2019), the Urdu-translated Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (Hussain & Kausar, 2010), and the Civic Engagement Scale (Doolittle & Faul, 2013) were used to measure religious orientation and psychological distress. The findings demonstrated a direct connection between political behavior and religiousness. It suggests that people in religious societies may exhibit more aggressive political behavior.

Keywords: *religiousness; political behavior; intrinsic religiousness; extrinsic religiousness*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the types of participation is political engagement. It is regarded as a sign of the socio-cultural and political development of a nation and demonstrates the participation of its citizens in shaping its future (Wamsler et al., 2022). One of the most effective ways to achieve real and sustained development is to encourage people to participate in the process from decision-making to implementation (Ozaki & Shaw, 2022). According to political sociology, a civil society is characterized by political engagement. The relationship between civil society and political society is actualized by political engagement, which is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Political engagement refers to a specific pattern of political participation based on the shared values, worldviews, norms, and traditions of a society (Froissart, 2014).

Religious beliefs or practices are among the factors that have the biggest impact on political engagement (Ahmad et al., 2022). Any person or phenomenon that displays religious and occasionally moral values or signs is referred to as being religious as a factor influencing political engagement (Wallman, 2022). Anthropological studies place a special emphasis on religion as a cultural system (Oyeleye & Fawziyah, 2022) and social phenomenon (Mamarasulovich, 2022). According to Durkheim, a society's moral standards and shared beliefs are expressed through its religious practices. All believers are brought together in a single spiritual society with a religious establishment through a shared set of beliefs and behaviors that are attributed to religious things and matters, that is, things and matters that are made distinct and sacred (Durkheim, 1968).



According to Geertz, religion provides believers with a religious landscape, which helps them overcome their spiritual problems. He thinks that religion offers a more extensive justification for the uniformity of life in addition to trying to explain some of the wonderful aspects of the universe (Geertz, 1973). In general, being religious means being involved in religion in a way that influences one's attitude, inclination, and actions (Hassan & Pandey, 2020). According to Allport, religion serves as a unifying belief system for all people (Allport, 1950). The religious value system, which affects every aspect of an individual's life, is, in other words, the highest value system that unifies and unites human life (Allport, 1950). In fact, religion gives a person a way of thinking about life that satisfies their emotions as well as their rational side (Paul & Elder, 2019). In light of this, Allport draws the conclusion that all great religions impart to their adherents a kind of worldview that is both logically straightforward and harmonically beautiful (Allport, 1950).

Despite being imitative and derivative, he claims that mature religious faith has a dynamic quality. He acknowledges that all forms of religiosity are rooted in psychological immaturity, including physical issues, egocentric motivations, childish interpretation, etc. However, he thinks that religious sentiments have the power to transform these immaturity-driven roots and the motivations they represent. When this phenomenon takes place, religion takes the place of "prime motivation" in a person. In other words, within the context of a person's personality, religious feelings become autonomous (Allport, 1950).

The main resources for political participation are time, money, and civic abilities (Heger, & Hoffmann, 2021). Heger in 2021 contend that individuals with strong religious leanings can develop their civic competence through participation in group discussions, public speaking, social interaction, and letter-writing to elected officials. Therefore, religious preferences provide a wealth of resources that improve people's participation in society as a whole. Scheufele and his colleagues' findings in 2003 demonstrate that religion's cognitive dimension has a negative impact on democratic citizens, its structural dimension offers a conducive environment for enhancing citizens' perceptions of their political efficacy and other forms of participation. According to Mutz, (2006), people who hold religious convictions are particularly eager to join political parties and take part in political activities. O'Neill and Gidengil, in 2013 places special emphasis on the connection between women's political participation and religious beliefs as a component of social capital. He argues that religious beliefs develop the civic skill potentials of women and this can help increase political and social participation. He contends that religious convictions help women reach their full civic potential, which can boost political and social participation.

In addition of this, Religion has been empirically proven to be interconnected not only with political engagement, also strongly linked with absence of psycho pathology. In 2008, Contemporary study on religious orientation and psychopathology was investigated by Wai revealed positive connection between strict religious direction, wellbeing, locus of control and stress among laborers in Abuja, Nigeria. In the same context, Preceding investigation differently link mental health problems with Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosities. Mental distress is mental well-being problems and defined as a state of emotive confusion revealed by signs of anxiety (e.g., lack of energy; headaches; insomnia) sadness (hopelessness; lack of Concentration; sorrow) and physical symptoms (e.g., headaches; insomnia; lack of energy) (Mirowsky & Ross, 2002). Similarly, a study conducted in 2000 by Maltby and Day on 360, scholars concluded that depressing signs were related to outward extrinsic religiosity and negatively related to intrinsic religiosity. In the same context, association between spiritual direction and psychological well-being was studied by Ventis (1995) and he concluded positive connection between mental health and basic religious orientation; undesirable correlation among mental health and outward religious direction, although quest orientation showed mixed result. Likewise, in 2021, Bentzen conceptualized prayer as intrinsic religious practice that has an ability to change the perception of real event by fostering the feeling of personal control. Similarly, previous literature findings revealed the moderating effect of religious orientation on emotional problems (depression and stress) (Wnuk, 2021).

Moreover, numerous studies also solidify above mentioned link between quest orientation and life satisfaction. They conceptualized that quest-oriented individual focused on perpetual examination



of existential reality by indulging themselves to be participating in conflicting argumentation; this continuous conflict makes them anxious and anguish (MENOUEUR, 2022; Klaassen & McDonald, 2002; Goldfried & Miner, 2002). Empirical literature also discovered a positive, constructive link among quest orientation and mental well-being. For example, in 2003, Maltby and Day conceptualized that quester questioning tendency and willingness to change work as adaptive coping strategy for them as they intellectually assessed negative circumstances. While, individual with inflexible, rigid religious beliefs system have maladaptive coping strategies because they viewed traumatic event as loss or threat.

As a protective factor, questers are in perpetual search of meaning and determination in one's life, religious and spiritual reality; which work as buffer against mental illness and anxiety. Questioning approach of quester motivates them to optimistically interpret negative events and perceive them an essential element of growth (Giomo, 2000; Messay & Rye, 2012; Wulff, 2019).

It has been already mentioned in different researches that contemporary trend in religious psychology also focused on intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation and their relation with well-being. However, several demographics like age and gender differently linked to religiosity and psychological well-being. Emmons (2005) concluded strong connection between religiosity and well-being in women as compared to men as well as it tends to increase with increasing age. Similarly, Saleem and colleagues in 2022 investigate the link among spiritual well-being and hope and found that elderly people with high mystical well-being scored high on quality of life, positive mood and all domains of hope. Likewise, in Pakistani context, associations between religiosity and well-being have been examined in the sample of 18-60 years, and significant positive association between well-being and religiosity; and negative link among religiosity, anxiety and loneliness was found (Chiu et al., 2022). Above mentioned literature, conclusive to develop the connection among religious orientation and mental well-being, but some other constructs have perceptible link with both religious orientation and spiritual wellbeing.

Other studies suggest that, in addition to having a direct impact on political engagement, religiosity also has an impact on political aware. In this regard, Gill and colleagues in 2004 contends that religiousness' impact on political relations increases people's motivation to participate in politics as well as their perception of the quality and effectiveness of their influence. Results from the study by Aghazadeh and Mahmoudoghli in 2017 showed that religiousness is the more crucial factor affecting political attitude in the socio-cultural and political environment studied, despite the high influence of value inclinations. Hoffman and Dowd (2008) assert that humans with stronger non secular dispositions have better political consciousness and that faith and religion have a vast impact on their political engagements primarily based on, study's findings. Their findings demonstrate that participation is recommended by using each Islam and Christianity, but Muslim participation has been better than Christian participation. Epley (2005) investigated the interaction among Buddhism, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, the 5 reliable religions of Indonesia and civic society and politics. He makes mention of ways a person's motivation for collaborating in faith can vary. In line with his studies, the cultural, spiritual, and political influences of Islamic practices and beliefs have been awesome from the ones of different religions. His findings imply that Islamic ideals and customs have had one-of-a-kind cultural, religious and political impacts from different religions. This observe studies questions are. What impact does faith have on Pakistani Muslims' political conduct? (2) How does Pakistani religiosity have an effect on cognitive participation? (3) What effect does religion have on Pakistanis' direct and oblique participation? (4) How does faith, every inner and external, affect political participation? (five) What political alternatives are made via Pakistani Muslims who suffer from mental contamination? (6) What effect faith has on the Pakistani Muslims mental health?

PARTICIPANTS

155 men and 225 women made up the sample of 400 young adults who were arbitrarily chosen from Govt. College Universities in Faisalabad, Lahore, and Sargodha. The participants' mean age was



19.6 years old (\pm SD = .47) and they had undergraduate and graduate degrees. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24.

MEASURES

The following measures were used in the current study, along with a separate demographic data form, to gather basic demographic data:

Muslim Religious Orientation Scale (MROS)

The three aspects of religious orientation, namely Extrinsic Religious Orientation, Quest Religious Orientation, and Intrinsic Religious Orientation, were measured using the independently developed Muslim Religious Orientation Scale (MROS). MROS measure 22 items on a five-point Likert scale, varying from 0=total disagreement to, 4=complete acceptance. It yields three sub-scale F1 (extrinsic religious orientation include item no 3,5,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16), F2 (quest religious orientation have item no 17,18,19,20,21,22) and F3(intrinsic religious orientation contains item no (1,2,4,6,7,8). MROS has total .90 cronbach Alpha and .94, .74 and .60 Cronbach Alpha for extrinsic, quest and intrinsic sub-scales respectively.

The K10 Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

The K10 Kessler Psychological Distress Scale is brief, reliable and valid instrument was created by Kessler and Mroczek, in 1992. K10 explicitly used to assess the sign of anxiety and sadness experienced in the recent four weeks. Urdu translated version of scale was used in present study (Hussain & Kausar,2010). It assessed 10 general psychological distress questions using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "always" and 5 denoting "never." Previously computed Cronbach's alpha of K10 was 0.93. Anxiety domain contains item no 1,2,3,5 and 6. Depression domains contain item no 4,7,8,9 and 10. For present study alpha reliability was 60 and .65 respectively for anxiety and depression

Civic Engagement Scale

This scale, created by Doolittle and Faul (2013), assesses how an individual's attitudes and behaviors have changed as a result of their service-learning experience. It has two sub-scales (attitude and behavior). It is highly reliable self-report 14 items 7-point Likert scale with alpha radiality of .91

PROCEDURE

After obtaining the formal approval and permissions of the department heads and the university, the researcher personally approached the study's sample. The sample was informed of the study's significance and objectives. The data collection was assured to be confidential, and informed consent was obtained in accordance with APA ethical standards. Participants were provided with the research measures for the study, alongside both written and oral instructions, and were asked for truthful replies. The average timeframe for each participant was 30 minutes, and participants were praised for their participation at the conclusion. Following collection, data was examined for cleaning and analysis. A total of 450 people were sought, but only 400 were able to participate in the final research since the remaining participants dropped out of the sample in the middle of it or gave random or incomplete answers to the questionnaires, which made them ineligible for the data collection.

Scoring & Statistical Analysis

Final data was subject to statistical analysis and hypotheses testing with SPSS-22 version. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, Alpha Coefficient and Hierarchical Regression were employed to achieve objectives of study.



RESULTS

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliabilities for all study variables (N = 400).

Scales	k	M	SD	α	Range		Skewness
					Potential	Actual	
MROS	22	33.22	9.71	.90	0-4	.55-1.0	-.27
ERO	10	10.10	4.87	.87	0-4	.55-.1.0	.26
IRO	6	9.82	5.76	.71	0-4	.55-1.0	-.48
QRO	6	13.41	4.31	.73	0-4	.58-1.0	-.29
CES	14	12.31	5.81	.91	0-7	.70-1.0	.29
ATD	7	10.61	7.81	.77	0-7	.50-1.0	.27
BEH	7	10.41	7.91	.73	0-7	.50-1.0	.26
KPD	10	20.71	14.3	.78	1-5	.50-1.0	.27
ANX	5	9.71	6.78	.63	1-5	.45-1.0	.24
DEP	5	9.31	6.71	.61	1-5	.44-1.0	.23

Note 1. MROS = Muslim religious orientation scale; ERO = extrinsic religious orientation; IRO = intrinsic religious orientation; QRO =quest religious orientation; CES=civic engagement scale; ATD = attitudes; behaviors= BEH; KPD =Kessler Psychological Distress Scale; ANX= Anxiety; DEP= Depression.

Note 2. S.E is .091 for all the instruments.

As show in Table 1, all measures affirmed a vivid level of inner consistency.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix for All the Variables Used in the Study (N=400)

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	---	.24**	.64**	.53**	.62**	.54**	.41**	.38**	.32**	.26**
2		---	-.54**	-.06	.12**	.29**	.10**	.25**	.56**	.57**
3			---	.24**	.56**	.47**	.26**	-.41**	-.49**	-.41**
4				---	.50**	.33**	.31**	.32**	.023*	.021**
5					---	.53**	.32**	-.36**	-.25**	-.17**
6						---	.34**	-.33**	-.31**	-.28**
7							---	-.34**	-.18**	-.19**
8								---	.23**	.16**
9									---	.15**
10										---

Note2 = Muslim religious orientation scale; 2 = extrinsic religious orientation; 3 = intrinsic religious orientation; 4 = quest religious orientation; 5 = civic engagement scale; 6 = attitude; 7 = behavior; 8 = kessler psychological distress Scale; 9= anxiety; 10 = depression

*p < .05. **p < .01.



The similarities between all of the constructs were in the predicted directions, as seen in Table 2

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviations and t-Value for Gender among Study Variables (N=400).

Scales & subscales	Males (n = 175)		Females (n = 225)		t (400)	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
MRO	20.1	10.5	30.8	12.4	3.51***	7.46	12.7	0.9
IRO	18.0	9.18	31.2	16.8	3.84***	7.90	13.2	0.8
ERO	11.6	4.16	15.1	10.9	1.21**	6.90	10.3	0.1
QRO	16.1	4.17	13.9	2.60	2.21**	1.01	6.01	0.1
CES	43.5	6.51	20.8	10.4	3.07**	-3.84	1.12	.07
ATD	39.1	3.85	17.7	9.34	3.68**	.665	2.19	0.3
BEH	33.9	2.54	19.4	8.34	2.30**	-.891	-.071	0.2
KPD	19.4	8.31	31.4	10.3	-2.08***	-5.64	-.162	0.2
ANX	10.3	2.53	16.5	11.4	-6.82***	-8.38	-4.63	0.3
DEP	9.10	2.54	17.7	10.6	-6.93***	-8.53	-4.64	0.3

Note 3. MROS = Muslim religious orientation scale; ERO = extrinsic religious orientation; IRO = intrinsic religious orientation; QRO =quest religious orientation; CES=civic engagement scale; ATD = attitudes; behaviors= BEH; KPD =Kessler Psychological Distress Scale; ANX= Anxiety; DEP= Depression.

*P<.05, **p<.01, ***p < .001.

Above table indicates the mean, standard deviation and t value for male and female on MROS, CES and KPD and their subscale. Result showed significant mean difference on MROS, CES and KPD scales and subscales.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to empirically and conceptually explain how religion affects political involvement. The findings showed that there is a significant correlation between political activity and level of religious commitment in the group under study. The results of Allport (1950), Verba et al. (1993), Greenberg (2000), O'Neill (2004), Epley (2010), Hoffman and Dowd, and others are in agreement with this conclusion (2008). The findings of the research cited indicate that religious individuals are more politically conscious and that faith and religious-beliefs have a significant influence on their political behaviors. Also, there has been a specific trend for people with religious interests and views to join certain political parties and take part in political activities. Theoretically, and in accordance with Allport's theory, we can assert that religion, as a belief system, actually directs people towards intellectual and individual perfection. According to Allport, religion unites human existence as a value system and serves as a source or component of social solidarity, as well as the religious man is accountable for himself, his social environment, his values, and his countervalues. In actuality, from a religious standpoint, politics refers to taking part in and feeling accountable for events.

The intrinsic religiousness component is a stronger predictor across all political involvement dimensions and is more closely connected to political participation parameters. High scores on the intrinsic religiousness scale are an indication that the person is making an effort to demonstrate her value to society. It appears that people are more likely to adopt views about political participation that are more socially responsible. In fact, we might argue that intrinsic religiosity serves as a link between awareness and involvement. Religiousness must move beyond its abstract and prospective stage and demonstrate its actual religious dimension by participation actions before we can say that religious aspects have been realized. Those who are more religious are more likely to vote in elections, which supports the claim that Iran's present political system is based on religion, according to the findings of the current study. Iranians are familiar with the fundamentals of religious ideas since their society is one of religion and they get official and informal religious



instruction starting at a young age. Islam, on the other hand, views man as having obligations towards both society and God in addition to his relationship with God. Those who are more devoted to their religious beliefs feel obligated to participate in politics. Everyone is accountable for themselves, their God, their society, etc. from a religious perspective. Everyone is also required to be sensitive to their future, their presence in society, their action, and to avoid any governmental aberrations. The findings showed an apparent connection between political activity and religiousness. These findings suggest that people in religious communities may be more politically engaged. Religion has a significant impact on how people view politics and legislation, and religious people, like all other types of people, prioritize some political matters above others. Also, just like partisanship, religion offers a filter by which political events might be seen. Indeed, it is clear that religiosity is only one of several factors that influence political engagement, and changing it in society does not happen all at once or in a short period of time, but the presence of religiosity is a significant predictor of political engagement because, according to Islamic religious teachings, Muslims must work to build and consolidate an Islamic society, and one of the rules of socialization is participation in political affairs. These all shed light on how political participation is conducted in Islamic societies. While religion does not provide political objectivity, it can assist in making sense of a vast and perplexing world that is continually questioning firmly held ideas. My research's findings will demonstrate that religion does influence the political viewpoints of the Iranian population. Moreover, religious feeling has a significant impact on politics.

The intrinsic, extrinsic, and both have been evaluated as revelation, orientation, and conviction in the two-fold model of religious orientation; nevertheless, they distinguish personalities based on their beliefs, perceptions, and reasoning. People who are intrinsically motivated are pushed towards perfection, independence, and a sense of mortality. They value, find remarkable, and see practical application in their faith. They are becoming more humble, traditional, loving, sympathetic, accommodative, and capable. They were obedient to and committed to customary ways of living, and they vigorously coordinated their religious convictions in all facets of their inner and outward lives. They are perceptive, knowledgeable, and selfless (Sherman & Plante, 2001; Rabin & Koenig, 2002).

A few more unique findings have been made in agreement with the results that have already been mentioned. Studies have shown that an innate religious orientation has a bad link with mental anguish, instability, anxiousness, and wretchedness (Salsman & Carlson, 2005). Also, several studies have found that inherent religion acts as a cradle and is negatively correlated with a difficult negative life event (Connor, Cobb & Connor, 2003; Dezutter, Soenens & Hutsebaut, 2006; Khamis, 2007). According to Smith, McCullough, and Poll (2003), a person who is fundamentally religious would have a negative link with sadness. Maltby and Day (2003) also looked at the relationship between religion and sorrow and came to the conclusion that melancholy had an antagonistic relationship to fundamental innately religiosity, self-worth, problem-focused coping, and optimism. Studies by Skinner, Correa, Skinner, and Bailey (2001) and Biesinger and Arikawa (2008) found a correlation between intrinsic religion and higher levels of joy and lower levels of suffering, anxiety, and concern. In a similar vein, Pollard and Bates' (2004) study examined the relationship between intrinsic religiosity and mental well-being and found that it was negatively correlated with undesirable qualities including stress, doom, and illogical convictions.

The results of the current study also show a considerable gender gap in religious inclination, with female individuals showing a greater level of religiosity than male participants. Also, these findings were consistent with other research that revealed women to be more religious than men and postulated a similar pattern of relationship (Raza, Yousaf & Rasheed, 2016; Ladd & Spilka, 2006; Sullins, 2006; Yates & Pillai, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrated a clear connection between political activity and religiousness. These findings suggest that people in religious communities may be more politically engaged. Religion has a significant impact on how people view politics and legislation, and religious people, like all other

types of people, prioritize some political matters above others. Also, just like partisanship, religion offers a filter by which political events might be seen. Indeed, it is clear that religiosity is only one of several factors that influence political engagement, and attempt to change it in society does not happen all at once or within a short period of time. However, the presence of religiosity is a significant predictor of political engagement because, according to Islamic religious teachings, Muslims are required to work to build and consolidate an Islamic society, and one of the rules of socialization is participation in political affairs. These all shed light on how political participation is conducted in Islamic societies. While religion does not provide political objectivity, it can assist in making sense of a vast and perplexing world that is continually questioning firmly held ideas. The findings of my study will demonstrate that religion does influence Pakistani citizens' political identities. Additionally, religious sentiment has a significant impact on politics and is significantly influenced by each person's mental health.

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