

## Students' Religiosity as a Predictor of Students' Future Orientation: Analyzing the Effect on Secondary School Students of Punjab

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### Abstract

*Religion has been considered as an outline for the sense of meaning and purpose. This research explores the effect of secondary school students' religiosity & Spirituality on their future orientation in Punjab. This research seeks an answer to the contribution of students' religious affiliation (fellowship with Islam, Christianity or Hinduism) and religiosity (Faith-based Coping (FBC) and Religious Social Support (RSS)) and FO. A total of 296 Muslims, 290 Christians, and 278 Hindu students participated in this research. Religiosity and Spirituality scale for Youth (RaSSy) developed by Brittany (2011) was adopted, while Future Orientation Scale (FOS) for measuring Future Vision towards Subject Choice and Future Vision towards Profession Choice was developed by researchers. The research concludes that students' religiosity has a significant impact on their future orientation (FO). The religiosity moderately explains variances in FO of Muslims and Christians; however, it has a high impact on Hindu students in Punjab*

### Key Words

Religiosity, Future Orientation, Muslim, Christian, Hindu

### Introduction

Students are the bricks for building the bright future of any nation. Their potential provides fuel to run economies. Students of today will be masterminds of our future and their contribution is also very important for countries' development. So, students have the main responsibility to lead the country on the developmental track. Rawnsley (2000) is of the view that students are the pillars of society for future life. That is why; students should devote their life to the attainment of knowledge and acquire discipline in order to become the well-educated persons of the society to play their role in its development. Every student must acquire all those capabilities, capacities and skills which will enable him to become a successful member of society. All types of activities are useful for the development of an individual if one remains within the limits. Education is the source that helps a student to become aware of the capacities and strengths within him and enables him to lead his life without any fear. That type of education was mainly adopted to foster the best abilities in the students, families, communities and even in the society so that every individual can benefit from it being a member of such a successful society.

As we know that all types of educations are focusing on education for the future. It is found that the future is the dimension that is missing in our education system (Hicks, 2002). Future orientation is concerned about the future and tells us about the function of education in parts and as a whole. The aim of FO is to provide students the opportunities for a better future so that, they may be able to manage their future life in a better way (Wolff, 2004). Future study reveals that there are two types of attitudes reflected by students i.e. reactive and proactive (Rubin, 2002). The main goals of proactive education are to promote attitudes as a result of providing opportunities for people with future skills, providing alternative creative future visions. It is also done by promoting active participation on the part of the individual whatever the circumstances will be in the future (Haapala, 2002). As noted by Romero (2013), FO pertains to be highly effective specifically in interim progressive stages, for instance in premature youth. A teenage could be considered an important period in the life of many children. In this stage, they start making their life route and selections of relationships in society, groups, friends and the importance of academic success (Carlo et.al., 2012).

Nurmi (2005) perceived FO as an important skill of any individual to think about his future actions, conceive its meaning in his personal capacity and working with rationality. Wells and Claxton (2002) are of the view that future orientations are the source to improve critical awareness of a variety of demonstrations for the future. When we compare and contrast different interpretations of the future by making use of a variety of broadcasting sources and explore the visions of persons about life in the past, it is helpful for the students to view the pattern of life in the future. This will be helpful for the students to recognize and challenge their own as well as their society's assumptions about the future.

Zhang et.al. (2011) linked FO with academics aiming and consider the role of locus of control, internalization and self-efficiency as an influential mediating factor. Vansteenkiste et.al., (2009) explained that most of the future-oriented teenagers think that their success and modification in their behavior are due to their own efforts and interest to change their life instead of considering the importance of external perceptions and factors which play important role in their behavior formation. Manzi, Vignoles and Regalia (2010) identify that in adolescence period, most individuals attain different progressive capabilities. The main job of this period is to control emotions and manage time distribution, it is considered as a very insane idea, to think in this manner that all worlds' time is for his or herself. The world is only giving importance to him that everyone here is to take care of his feelings. Moshman (2009) claims that it is very important to convince young ones to perceive the importance of time before getting out from the age of adolescence and to understand that time is running short and society is demanding from them to make their identity before this age.

For a better life in the future, education, as well as religiosity, has been considered as the most important source (Peterson & Webb, 2006). It is concluded by different educationists that religious minded individuals spend a better and healthy life as compared to other people and ultimately, they live quality life or maybe live longer (McIntosh & Spilka, 1990). Religion is embedded in the blood of humans, right from the commencement of this universe. The behaviors and thoughts of human beings are always dominated by their religion. Some researchers viewed religion as the structured arrangement of practices, principles, services and symbols (Koeing, Mc Cullough, & Larson, 2001). Religion can affect significantly the beliefs, ethics, and conducts of the individuals (Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2004). The tool which can be used for the measurement of the religion of one person is called religiosity. Every individual occupies a certain degree of religiosity (Mariam et al., 2011). Wheeler (1989) has briefly defined religiosity as one's motivation towards religion. Religiosity is basically the level to which the people of a special religious group are committed and devoted (Essoo & Dibb, 2004). Morgan and Sternk (2010) revealed in their study that religious people play a significant role in developing attitudes towards science and society. Barro and McCleary (2006) have explained a positive relationship between attitude and its effects on science and society. They describe that more the people are educated the stronger is their beliefs about science, society and nature. They have the capacity to rationalize their religious beliefs in this way.

In its broader sense, it is found that religiosity is a comprehensive term that is used for the expression of many aspects of religious activity, beliefs and dedication (religious doctrine). Hill and Maltby (2009) have explained the term religiosity in its narrow perspective. They present their view in the words that religiosity is concerned more with how a religious person is and it is less concerned with how a person is while performing religious ceremonies, retelling specific myths and in reviving definite types of myths. Khalek (2010) has also found in this regard that religiosity may be considered the most prominent feature of quality of life among the students. Dalton (1988) stated that religiosity is particularly very important for secondary school students in the process of learning and obtaining experiences. It is due to the fact that secondary school life is the time of their heightened sensitivity about their personal identity, the decision about future life and ideology. In their life, it is a time of wonderful potentiality and vulnerability in their development. It is a great time of thinking about the future when we concern about their purpose, meaning and commitment interaction with the forces of their cognitive development, maturation and social expectations.

In order to be prepared to compete for challenges in a global world, all students must be able to think towards the future. Schools should perform their important part in developing the future generation of society. As students are the nation builders and the future leaders of the country so their visions of the future can be marked as an indicator of national leadership. That is why, the main idea of the present research was to investigate the perception of secondary school students (SSS) regarding the effect of religiosity on the FO of Muslim, Christian and Hindu students.

## **Research Methodology**

In the present research, the descriptive research design was used by the researchers. A research design provides a guideline for the researcher to execute his study in the best possible way and also helps to analyze the subsequent study data (Haider & Qureshi, 2016). Under descriptive research design, the survey is a very important technique

to collect relevant data on large scale, so in the present study, the survey technique is utilized to collect data from the respondents (Haider & Hussain, 2014).

### Participants

All secondary school students of three different religions (Muslim, Christians, and Hindus) who were enrolled in public and private schools, were the population of the study. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2017), the Muslims population comprised 96.28% and Non-Muslims comprised 3.72% of the total population, in which two major communities are the Hindus and the Christians. Whereas the study sample comprised of 296 Muslim (149 male and 147 female), 290 Christian (182 male and 108 female) and 278 Hindu (162 male and 116 female) conveniently selected students from Punjab, Pakistan. Before collecting data, we sought informed consent from all participants. There was total of 493 males and 371 females and their ages ranged from 13 to 18 years (mean = 16.34, SD = 1.22).

### Measures

#### Religiosity and Spirituality Scale for youth (RaSSY)

For measuring and studying religious beliefs, religious practices, religious social support and religiousness, different researchers developed many scales to study this important phenomenon. However, RaSSY structured by Brittany Cornell Hernandez (2011) was found most suitable for the present research. This scale encompasses 26 questions, measuring two-dimension such as, Faith-based Coping (FBC) 13 items ( $\alpha = 0.819$ ) and Religious Social Support (RSS)/Activities 13 items ( $\alpha = 0.791$ ). All items were gauged on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### Future Orientation Scale (FOS)

For measuring the FO, evidently, it was the dependent variable of the study. We developed a Future Orientation Scale (FOS) to meet the study requirements. Two factors of students' future orientation were developed e.g., Future orientation towards subject choice 6 items ( $\alpha = 0.774$ ) and Future orientation towards profession choice comprised 10 items ( $\alpha = 0.798$ ). The questions of this scale were also rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (SDA) to 5 (SA) and the few questions were reverse coded. Moreover, their validity was supported and confirmed by Confirmatory factor analysis.

### Results

In the process of data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistical measures were applied. The results deal with the analysis and interpretation in the light of the study objectives.

**Table 1.** Mean and SD of RaSSY & FOS

Factors	Students	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Religiosity and Spirituality Scale for Youth Subscales</b>		
1. Faith-based Coping	3.80	0.51
2. Religious Social Support/Activities	3.89	0.65
3. Overall Religiosity (RaSSY)	3.82	0.52
<b>Future Orientation Scale</b>		
1. Future Vision towards Subject Choice	3.83	0.66
2. Future Vision towards Profession Choice	3.52	0.57
3. Overall Future Orientation Scale	3.68	0.54

The results in table 1 reveals the mean and SD of Subscales of RaSSY and FOS. In religiosity scale, religious social support (RSS) has high mean score ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) as compared to faith-based coping ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ). Moreover, the mean score of overall religiosity scale is also very satisfying ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). Furthermore, in future orientation scale, future vision towards subject choice has high mean value ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) as compared to future vision towards profession choice ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Likewise, the mean value of overall future vision scale is also in highly acceptable range ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ).

**Table 2.** Correlation for Dimensions of Religiosity & Spirituality and Future Orientation Scale

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Faith-Based Coping	–					
2. Religious Social Support	.628**	–				
3. RaSSY	.877**	.925*	–			
4. Future orientation towards Subject Choice	.282*	.483**	.436*	–		
5. Future orientation towards Profession Choice	.376**	.603**	.556**	.517**	–	
6. Future Orientation Scale	.373*	.618**	.564**	.891*	.850**	–

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

The results of table 2, explores the relationship (correlation) between RaSSY and FOS subscales. In students' dataset, statistically positive correlation was found among the subscales of RaSSY with FOS subscales. Faith-based Coping has a weak significant correlation with future vision towards subject choice ( $r = .282$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and also significant correlation with future orientation towards profession choice ( $r = .376$ ,  $p = .01$ ). The religious social support, also has moderate correlation with future orientation towards subject choice ( $r = .483$ ,  $p = .01$ ) and future orientation towards profession choice ( $r = .603$ ,  $p = .01$ ). Faith-based coping has moderate correlation ( $r = .628$ ,  $p = .01$ ) with religious social support. Future vision towards subject choice has moderate correlation with future vision towards profession choice ( $r = .517$ ,  $p = .01$ ). Moreover, religiosity & spirituality of students also has a moderate significant association with students' future orientation ( $r = .564$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

**Table 3.** Simple linear Regression of Dimensions of Religiosity & Spirituality Predicting Subscales of Future Orientation

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	$\beta$	T	F	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Faith-Based Coping (FBC)</b>					
	FSC	0.365	8.643**	74.696**	0.079
	FPC	0.418	11.904***	141.706***	0.141
<b>Religious Social Support (RSS)</b>					
	FSC	0.278	6.303*	61.989*	0.078
	FPC	0.331	13.216***	193.532***	0.364
<b>Religiosity &amp; Spirituality</b>					
	FOS	0.578	20.068***	402.705***	0.318

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

FSC = Future vision towards subject choice, FPC = Future vision towards rofession choice, FOS = Future Orientation Scale

Results explored that FBC explained only 7.9% variance ( $R^2 = .079$ ,  $F(1, 862) = 74.696$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in FSC and 14.1% variance ( $R^2 = .141$ ,  $F(1, 862) = 141.706$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in FPC (See table 3). The results illustrated that FBC has a main effect on FPC and moreover, a single unit change in FBC will affect FPC 41.8% ( $\beta = .418$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, RSS contribute 7.8% ( $R^2 = .078$ ,  $F(1, 862) = 61.989$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in FSC and 36.4% ( $R^2 = .364$ ,  $F(1, 862) = 193.532$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in FPC. Analysis explored RSS has a main effect on FPC and a single unit change in RSS will affect FPC 33.1% ( $\beta = .331$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a whole, results depict that RaSSY has 31.8% contribution ( $R^2 = .318$ ,  $F(1, 862) = 402.705$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in explaining FO. Analysis revealed that a single unit change in RaSSY will affect FO 57.8% ( $\beta = .578$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 4.** Religion wise effect of Religiosity & Spirituality on Future Orientation of Muslim, Christians and Hindu Students

Category	DV	$\beta$	t	F	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Muslim Students</b>					
	Future Orientation	0.521	10.273**	105.527**	0.264
<b>Christian Students</b>					
	Future Orientation	0.552	9.840**	96.819**	0.252

<b>Hindu Students</b>				
Future Orientation	0.783	13.107***	171.806***	0.384

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

IV = Religiosity & Spirituality

Table 4, demonstrates the religion wise effect of religiosity & spirituality on FO of Muslim, Christians and Hindu students. In Muslim student dataset, religiosity explained 26.4% variance ( $R^2 = .264$ ,  $F(1, 294) = 105.527$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in students' FO. Results revealed that a single unit change in Religiosity will affect FO 52.1% ( $\beta = .521$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of Muslim students. Furthermore, in Christian students, religiosity contribute 25.2% ( $R^2 = .252$ ,  $F(1, 288) = 96.819$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in students' FO. Analysis explored that a single unit change in religiosity will affect FO 55.2% ( $\beta = .552$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of Christian students. Furthermore, in Hindu students, religiosity contribute 38.4% ( $R^2 = .384$ ,  $F(1, 276) = 171.806$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in students' FO. The results expressed that a single unit change in religiosity will affect FO of Hindu students 78.3% ( $\beta = .783$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

Religion is considered to be the most influential factor in contributing ethos, behavior, values and beliefs of individuals or groups of individuals in any community or organization (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Every individual always remains in search to get his or her religious individuality in every society, and this effort on an individual to obtain his/her individuality to satisfy his/her inner self make the religion a central point for his identity in the society (Coşgel & Minkler, 2004). They are able of thinking rationally about their future. That's why, most of the researchers have a strong belief that every individual should be well aware of the negative and positive effects of any decision or conclusion which they take about their profession, future or life. (Farrington, 2005).

Considering the importance of this idea, the current research conducted to explore the beliefs of secondary school students towards religiosity & spirituality and their future orientation. The initial exploration of results depicts many features of students' religiosity. Result comprehensively provide information in this regard by indicating that most of the students are satisfied and agreed regarding FBC and its different levels, they believed that students' religious belief make their life meaningful. Similarly, students have a moderate level of RSS and they are also agreed and satisfied with this factor. They supposed that their social activities are strong. The overall results revealed that students perceived RaSSy in their life. Brittany (2011) supported this result that most of the things mention receiving relief or control throughout periods of suffering by trusting on principles or by enchanting an accomplishment, such as pleading for strength.

The primary explanation of the study findings reveals many aspects of respondents' future orientation. The results show that students agreed with the level of FO in their life. However, students are not so much satisfied with FPC and its level in their daily life activities. Furthermore, students are satisfied with FSC and its levels in their lives. Ushure (2014) explained that the knowledge of FO is very important and necessary for all levels of students. If they have little knowledge about their FO or have limited scope to see their future in a positive way, this little FO knowledge will influence their future choices or choice of future selection negatively. Herren et al. (2011) reported that parents and guardians were the people who have the most influence on students when choosing to major in any field. Alexander et al. (2011) originate that students' subject selection or choice of subject or subject liking is chiefly influenced by the factors causative in specialized route assumed by students. Edward and Quinter (2012) explored that any student's tendency in the direction of a specific ground or issue, its partiality for specific work and similarity among their character and selected occupations is a significant aspect contributing in a professional way. The analysis demonstrates that FO is moderately better in students.

The results showed that faith-based coping has a weak significant correlation with a future orientation towards subject choice and also a significant correlation with a future orientation towards profession choice. The religious social support also has a moderate correlation with a future orientation towards subject choice and future orientation towards profession choice. However, the subscales of RaSSy and FOS have a significant association with each other. The FBC has a moderate correlation with RSS. Whereas, FO towards subject choice has a moderate relationship with FO towards profession choice. Overall RaSSy has a moderate correlation with FOS. Kinder (2005) claims that the religion of individual and their financial resources has significantly interfered with an individual's future planning. Willson (2011) explained that among many other variables, one of the main variables is the incongruity of the creed with a progression/career. Moreover, the results of regression, illustrated that there is a significant impact of secondary level students' religiosity on their FO in Punjab.

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