

A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS ROLE OF TEACHERS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT:

The teachers are said to catalyst of change and play an important role in their institutions especially in cultivating young minds toward the familiarity about religion and its practices in real life. The current study aimed to investigate the religious role of teachers and religious practices of students under this role. The random sample comprised of 265 students from Education University Faisalabad campus from five departments. The self-developed instrument named, Religious Attitude and Religious Practices Survey [RARPS] was used. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Pearson r, t-test and ANOVA were used. The result revealed that female students were found firm to practice religion when compared with male counterparts. If teachers are reflected themselves as role model of practicing the religion, the religious practices of students improved a lot and they also follow their teachers in religious aspects. It is suggested that teachers should play a religious role to inculcate religious beliefs among young students.

KEYWORDS: Religious Role, Religious Practices, Spiritual Father

INTRODUCTION

The profession of teaching is noblest among all professions in the society because its job nature is next to that of parents. According to Holy Quran,

Allah upraises the position of those among you who are faithful and those who acquire knowledge.¹ In another occasion, Allah (SWT) has stressed in the Holy Quran the right of a teachers as, do not call the messenger among you as you call one of another.² Quran and the Hadiths of Holy Prophet (PBUH) showed the errands as a part of Allah's mercy you deal with them softly. If you have hard heart, they would have damaged away from you.³ The first revelation of the Holy Quran bestowed on Holy Prophet (PBUH) stressed on the pursuance of knowledge and education in accord with Allah's SWT divine guidance. Read in the Name of thy Lord Who created You.⁴ The Quran says, Allah (SWT) will increase up to honorable ranks of those you believe and those who granted the knowledge.⁵ Hazrat Adam (RAA) was blessed highest rank among beings due to knowledge. He is invited in the Quran to pray an increase in knowledge.⁶

The Holy Prophet (SAW) achieved the height of distinction due to His excellence; He dissipated the world's darkness by His Grace. Superb were all His abilities, pray for dedications on him and his descendants.⁷ The sayings of Holy Prophet (PBUH), obtain knowledge from cot to grave.⁸ He further said that attainment of knowledge is the duty of every

¹ Quran, 58:11

² Quran, 24:63

³ Al-Quran, 3:159

⁴ Al-Quran, 96:1

⁵ Al-Quran, 58:11

⁶ Al-Quran, 20:114

⁷ Saadi Sheeraazi

⁸ Muttafaqun Alaih

Muslim.⁹ According to Holy Prophet (PBUH), wisdom is the misplaced property of Muslim, he recuperates it wherever he discovers it.¹⁰

Hazrat Ali (RA) narrated that: I would be lifetime slave of a person who teaches me even a single word. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was blessed as teacher. The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, this world as well as which it has is cursed excluding a good teacher and its student. The sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW), the best among you the student who learn Quran and the teacher who teach him. Imam Jafer Sadiq highlighted the teacher status as, on judgment day Allah (SWT) will pleased those who honor and respect a Muslim scholars and the vice versa. The Holy Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said, the sleep of a scholar is higher than one thousand Nafils offered by a sincere person.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Muslim teachers play an important role in their institutions especially in instructing of Islamic beliefs and values in addition to teaching and learning among students. According to¹¹ Quick (2004), the Muslim teacher is blessed and honored countless virtues by Allah SWT at a time. The live example of Muslim teacher is the role of coach, mentor, spiritual father and the murshid (religious guide) for the desirous young souls. The studies of¹² revealed that Muslim teachers have dual roles: they act as a mu'allim as well as murrabi.

⁹Ibn Maajeh Hadith, 224

¹⁰Tirmidhi

¹¹Quick, Shayhk Abdullah Hakim. (2004). Advice to an Islamic school teacher. Cape Town: International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR).

¹²Chanika, Jeewan. The Jihad in me: A reflective journey on the role of Islamic epistemology as a guiding framework for student engagement and teacher resistance in a post September 11th world. Unpublished master thesis, York University, Toronto. (2006).

*The mu'allim is a trainer and mentor of mind and transmit knowledge. Murrabi a trainer of personalities and souls and works as a role model.*¹³ *defined a murrabi as a person who syndicates a long life learning skills of virtue to make an ideal and perfect person. The best role model of all virtues of murrabi is our last and beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). A person who embraces the personally accountable to change characters of the lives of people is known as murabbi.*¹⁴ *The religious and worldwide beliefs are often supposed to impact their teaching strategies.*¹⁵

The religious role and belief are referred as doctrine or ideology about a said religion. The term religiosity is often used for religious practices, improve social relations and moral attitude in society. These beliefs are sacred and divine revelations bestowed from Almighty Allah to His Prophets. This is right path confirmed by Allah SWT for human beings.^{16 17}

*In the view point of*¹⁸ *showed the achievement of teachers is assessed on three criterions as students' intellectual attainment, socialization and mental health. The second one is*

¹³ Kazmi, Yedullah. *The notion of murabbi in Islam: An Islamic critique of trends in contemporary education*. Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University Islamabad (Pakistan). (1999).

¹⁴ Sa-u, S., Ali, H. M., Mohamad Sahari Nordin, M. S., Hassan, S. S., Khai-nunna, P., Bitleemeen, S., & Leepermsook, K. *Islamic Behaviors among Muslim Teachers in the Public Primary Schools in the Southern Thailand. The 3rd International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences on April 2, 2011 Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University Proceedings-Community Empowerment*. (2011).

¹⁵ Hausler, N., Pirner, M., Scheunpflug, A., & Kroner, S. Religious and professional beliefs of schoolteachers: A literature review of empirical research. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 18 No. 5(2019): 24-41. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.18.5.3>

¹⁶ Clouser, R. A. *The myth of religious neutrality. An essay on the hidden role of religious belief in theories* (revised ed.). Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame. (2005).

¹⁷ Smart, N. *Dimensions of the sacred. An anatomy of the world's beliefs*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. (1996).

¹⁸ Hashim, Che Noraini, The teaching and learning approaches of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). *Paper presented in the International Conference on*

professional judgment by teachers, school administrators and peers. The third is a students' judgment.¹⁹ recognized the moral development, learning geared, and analysis of action are indicators of teachers' identity.

There is a scarce literature on teachers' religious beliefs and students' religious practices^{20, 21}.²² investigated students' perceptions about teaching of ethical and concluded that students were satisfied with learning and moral roles. The learners got satisfied when teachers showed positive attitude about religious aspects. The moral refinement of Muslim teachers was supposed the highest instructional preparation, use of teaching aids, and evaluation of lesson.^{23, 24} explored the teachers' roles as instructional specialist, resource provider, curriculum specialist, learning facilitator, mentor, classroom facilitator, leader, and catalyst for change. The current study is based on the solid justification and empirical evidences that our teachers preach and students practice at higher educational institutions. It is the need of the hour to investigate the religious role of teachers and its relationship with students' religious practices in universities.

Teacher Education in Muslim World (ICTEM), Crown Princess Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. (2008, July).

¹⁹Custodio, L. J. (2003). Select readings: philosophy of education, cultures and values. Manila: UST Publishing House.

²⁰Levesque, P. J., & Guillaume, A. M. Teachers, evolution, and religion: No resolution in sight. *Review of Religious Research* 51 No. 4(2010): 349–365.

²¹White, K. R. Connecting religion and teacher identity: The unexplored relationship between teachers and religion in public schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 25 (2009): 857–866. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.01.004

²²Tamuri, Ab. Halim & Mohd Yusoff, Zulkifli. A study on Malaysian secondary school students' perceptions on the teaching of akhlāq. *Muslim Education Quarterly* 23 No. 3&4(2006): 16-32

²³Chewae, S. Teaching behaviors of Islamic studies teachers of elementary schools in Narathiwat Educational Service, Region Two. *Unpublished master thesis, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani.* (2008).

²⁴Cindy Harrison, & Joellen killion, Ten roles for teacher leaders. *Teachers as Leaders* 65 No. 1(2007): 74-77.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was based on the following objectives.

1. *To explore the perceptions about teachers' religious role and students' religious practices at university level.*
2. To compare the opinions of male and female students about teachers' religious role and students' religious practices at university level.
3. To identify the impact of teachers' religious role on students' regularity of prayers in university's multiple departments.
4. To investigate the relationship between teachers' religious role and students' religious practices.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

These were as under:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of students about teachers' religious role in the university.

RQ2: What are the perceptions of students about their religious practices in the university.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female students about teachers' religious role at university level.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between male and female students' religious practices at university level.

Ho3: There is no significant impact of teachers' religious role on the regularity of prayers among university students.

Ho4: There is no significant impact of teachers' religious role on the students of multiple departments in the university.

Ho5: There is no significant difference of students' religious practices in multiple departments in the university.

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Ho6: There is no significant relationship between teachers' religious role and students' religious practices.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was descriptive. For this purpose, survey method was designed to collect the data from the respondents.

INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The self-developed instrument Religious Attitude and Religious Practices Survey [RARPS] was used. This scale was based upon the instrument Religious Orientation Scale [ROS] used in the previous studies²⁵ (Iqbal & Javed, 2018). This instrument had two parts, religious attitude and role of teachers and religious practices of students. The instrument was filled up by the students who rank their teachers' religious attitude and role of their teachers that they play in the classrooms while delivering the lectures. These roles are inculcated to students often at the end or beginning of the lectures as a supplementary habits of teachers. The teachers in the classes used to discuss with students on religious issues, advise to perform their prayers regularly, the practices of speaking truth, dealing honestly, playing positive role towards duties and obligations, scholarships of reciting the Holy Quran. The difference was also explored on the opinions of students towards teachers who regularly inculcate the preaching to students and who were also a role model of religious practices as compared with the

²⁵ Iqbal Asif, & Javed Zahida, A study of religious orientation and performance among university students. The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal, 4 No. 2(2018): 99-113.

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teachers who did not do such tasks. The instrument comprised of 24 items on two variables as, religious attitude and role of teachers and religious practices among students.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

The reliability and validity of the instrument was ensured while conducting final study. The reliability value of the variable regarding the teachers' religious role was .934 and that of students' religious practices was .942. both values fulfilled the parameters of reliable instruments. The overall instrument's reliability was .962. These are the characteristics necessary for reliable and valid instruments. The validity was verified by the four experts in the education field most probably by the university teachers. The data collected through survey and entered on SPSSD to analyze it. The frequency analysis, tests of difference (t-test, ANOVA) and test of association (Pearson r) were applied while analyzing the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

RQ1: What are the perceptions of students about teachers' religious role in the university.

Table 1.

Frequency Analysis about Religious Role of Teachers

S#	Statements	SDA	DA	U	A	SA
	Religious Role of Teachers	Percent in round digits				
1	My teacher is a role model of religion.	14	18	3	26	38
2	In the class, teacher appreciates religious discussion.	11	20	10	25	35
3	The religious role of teachers matters a lot in moral and religious cultivation of young minds.	5	17	9	32	36
4	The teacher teaches us a religious lesson at the end of every lecture.	5	11	11	22	51
5	The teacher preaches to say our prayers regularly.	8	14	13	27	39
6	The teacher appreciates to practice	6	31	8	25	30

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	religious beliefs among students.					
7	My class starts with the recitation of Holy Quran.	20	24	12	40	14
8	The university invites religious scholars at every religious festival.	10	13	14	41	23
9	The teachers give us a time to say our prayers during the campus hours.	9	10	13	55	14
10	The teacher helps the students in solving religious problems.	10	16	19	35	20
11	The quiz about religious events is conducted in every semester.	16	14	8	36	27
12	The teacher remains isolated in any sectarian debate.	7	16	7	24	46

In the table 1, there were (64%) students who agreed and strongly agreed to claim that they find their teachers as role model of religion. About 32% students were disagreed and strongly disagreed about claiming that teachers were role models of religions. There were 60% students claimed that teachers appreciate religious discussion in the class. Thirty-one percent students perceived that teachers appreciate religious discussion in the class. There were 68% students opined that religious role of teachers matters a lot in moral and religious cultivation of young minds. Only 22% students disagreed and strongly disagreed about teachers' role in religious cultivation of young minds. There were 73% students were agreed and strongly agreed and claimed that teachers teach us a religious lesson at the end of every lecture. Only 16% students disagreed and strongly disagreed teachers' religious preaching in the class. There were majority of students about 66% who claimed that teachers preach to say their prayers regularly. About 55% students were agreed and strongly agreed that teachers appreciate to practice religious beliefs among students. 37% students were disagreed and strongly disagreed about practicing religious beliefs among them. Majority of the students (54%) claimed that their class starts with

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the recitation. Forty-four percent students disagreed that their class starts with the recitation of Holy Quran. Sixty-four percent students strongly agreed and agreed that university invites religious scholars at every religious festival. Majority of students (69%) claimed that their teachers give them a time to say their prayers during the campus hours. About 55% students were agreed and strongly agreed that teachers help them in solving religious problems. Majority of the students (63%) were agreed and strongly agreed that quiz about religious events is conducted in every semester. About 70% students were agreed and strongly agreed that teachers remain isolated in any sectarian debate.

RQ2: What are the perceptions of students about their religious practices in the university.

Table 2.

Frequency Analysis about Religious Practices of Students

S#	Statements	SDA	DA	U	A	SA
S#	Students' Religious Practices	Percent rounded in digits				
13	The teacher nourishes me like a spiritual father.	10	12	9	34	35
14	I am able to quote religious events from Islamic history.	12	13	6	31	39
15	I say my prayers regularly.	6	14	32	19	30
16	I often participate in religious discussion.	7	14	19	46	15
17	The students follow the teachers as role model.	6	16	10	47	21
18	I invite my classmates when go to say my prayer.	3	10	15	23	49
19	I am proud of having religious back ground of my family.	8	9	13	49	22
20	I often quote Quranic verses during religious discussion.	7	12	19	51	11
21	I have solid religious thoughts.	9	16	14	35	27
22	My regularity in prayer is dedicated to	5	14	16	37	28

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	my teachers.					
23	There should be religious discussion apart from routine lectures in the class.	10	11	20	35	26
24	My solid beliefs about religion is the result of my teachers' preaching.	10	11	12	39	30

The table 2 showed that the (69%) students were agreed and strongly agreed and perceived that teachers nourished the students like spiritual father. 22% students denied the role of teacher as spiritual father. Majority (70%) students agreed and strongly agreed that they quote religious events from Islamic history. 49% students claimed that they say prayers regularly. 32% remained neutral about the question of regular prayer. Sixty-one percent students claimed that they participate in religious discussion. About 68% students claimed that they follow their teachers as role model. Majority of students (72%) opined that they invite their fellows while going to say prayers. 71% students have proud of being religious back ground at home. 62% students claimed that they quote Quranic verses during religious discussion. 65% students dedicated their regularity in prayers to their teachers. 69% teachers claimed that their solid religious beliefs were the result of their teachers' preaching.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female students about teachers' religious role at university level.

Table 3

Comparison between Male and Female Students' Opinions about Teachers' Religious Role

Indicator	Gender	N	Mean	Std. D.	t	p
Teachers' Religious Role	Male	146	3.516	.826		
	Female	119	3.631	1.191	-.892	.374

In table 3, the t-test explored the comparison of male and female students' perceptions about religious role of teachers. It showed a non-significant differences between male and female students' views about their teachers' religious role at university. The mean achievement score of male ($M = 3.51660$, $sd = .826$) and female ($M = 3.631$, $sd = 1.191$), $t(263) = -.892$ students with respect to teachers religious role. So, the null hypothesis about difference in the opinions of male and female students about teachers' religious role at university level was accepted. It was obvious that both male and female students have same perceptions about teachers' religion role at university level.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between male and female students' religious practices at university level.

Table 4

Comparison between Male and Female Students' Religious Practices

Indicator	Gender	N	Mean	Std. D.	t	p
Students' Religious Practices	Male	146	3.560	.867		
	Female	119	3.806	1.011	-2.133	.034*

* $P < 0.05$

In table 4, the t-test was used for the comparison of male and female students' perceptions about religious practices of students. It showed a significant difference between male and female students' opinions about their religious practices at the university. The mean achievement score of male ($M = 3.560$, $sd = .867$) and female ($M = 3.806$, $sd = 1.011$), $t(263) = -2.133$ students with respect to religious practices. So, the null hypothesis about to compare the male and female students' religious practices at university level was rejected. It was evident that female students are more firm to practice religion at university level when compared with male counterparts.

Ho3: There is no significant impact of teachers' religious role on the regularity of prayers among university students.

Table 5

Impact of Teachers' Religious Role on Students' Regularity of Prayers

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	10.416	2	5.208	5.305	.006**
Within Groups	257.186	262	.982		
Total	267.601	264			

** $P < 0.01$

In table 5, ANOVA was executed to examine the effect of teachers' religious attitude on the students' regularity of prayers. It explored that teachers' religious role has a significant impact on students' regularity of prayers. There are three categories of students with respect to performing the prayers. One group performs the prayers

regularly, the second group performed the prayers two to three times in a day, the third group performed the prayers off and on. The results of $F(4, 5.208) = 5.305$, $P = .006$ showed a significant impact of teachers' religious role on students' regularity of prayers. So, the null hypothesis about significant impact of teachers' religious role on students' regularity of prayers was rejected.

Ho4: There is no significant impact of teachers' religious role on the students of multiple departments in the university.

Table 6

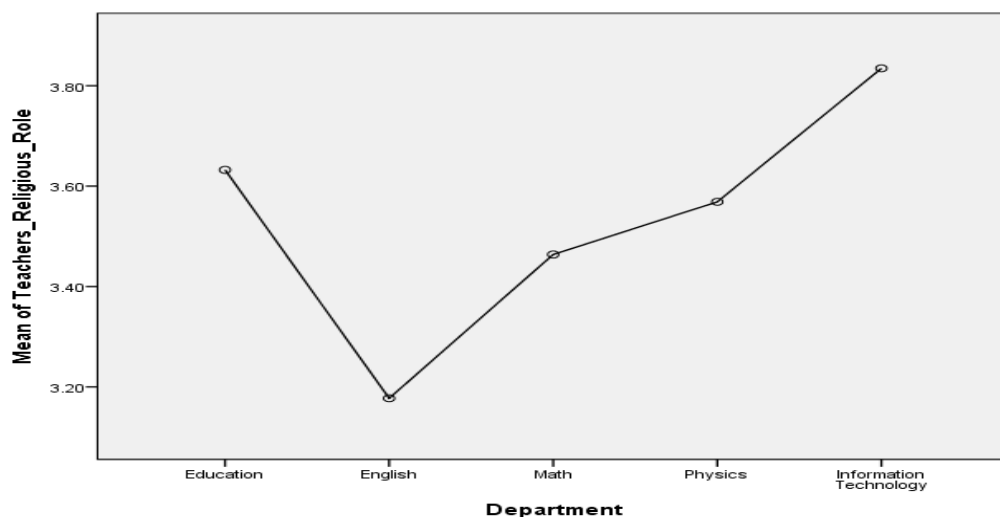
Impact of Teachers' Religious Role on Students' Regularity Practices in Multiple Departments

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	11.882	4	2.971	3.020	.018*
Within Groups	255.719	260	.984		
Total	267.601	264			
Post Hoc Test					
English	M = 3.177				
Information Technology	M = 3.834				.007**

** $P < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

In table 6, ANOVA was executed to examine the effect of teachers' religious attitude on the students' regularity practices in multiple departments. It explored that teachers' religious role has a significant impact on students' religious practices in different departments. There are five categories of departments. They were Education, English, Math, Physics and Information Technology. The results of $F(4, 2.971) = 3.020$, $P = .018$ showed a significant impact of teachers' religious role on

students' religious practices in different departments. So, the null hypothesis about significant impact of teachers' religious role on the students of multiple departments in the university was rejected. The further post Hoc test revealed that there exists significant difference in the mean values of English department and Information Technology department. The IT department students (3.834) were more religious oriented than that of students in English department (3.177, $p < 0.05$). The graph showed their mean comparisons.



Ho5: There is no significant difference of students' religious practices in multiple departments in the university.

Table 7

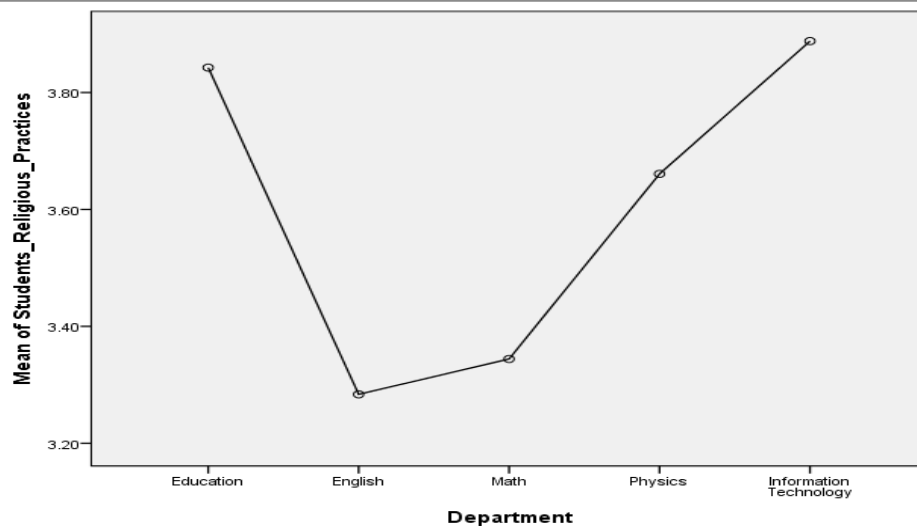
Comparison of Students' Religious Practices in Multiple Departments

ANOVA				
Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p

Between Groups	14.601	4	3.650	4.329	.002**
Within Groups	219.213	260	.843		
Total	233.814	264			
Post Hoc Test					
English	M = 3.177				
Information Technology	M = 3.834				.008**
Post Hoc Test					
English	M = 3.177				
Education	M = 3.632				.009**

**P<0.01

In table 7, ANOVA was executed to see the difference of students' religious practices in multiple departments. It explored that students' religious practices have significant difference in departments. There are five categories of departments. They were Education, English, Math, Physics and Information Technology. The results of $F(4, 3.650) = 4.329$, $P = .002$ showed a significant difference of students' religious practices in different departments. So, the null hypothesis about *significant difference of students' religious practices in multiple departments in the university* was rejected. The further post Hoc test revealed that there exists significant difference in the mean values of English department and Information Technology department. The IT department students (3.834) were more religious oriented than that of students in English department (3.177, $p < 0.05$). The Education department students (3.632) were more religious oriented than that of students in English department (3.177, $p < 0.05$). It is illustrated in the given graph.



Ho6: There is no significant relationship between teachers' religious role and students' religious practices.

Table 8

Relationship between Teachers' Religious Role and Students' Religious Practices (N=265)

Indicators	Mean	Pearson r	p
Teachers' Religious Role	3.567		
Students' Religious Practices	3.671	.801	.000**

**P<0.01

The Pearson r for the analysis of relationship of teachers' religious role with students' religious practices was applied. It showed a strong and positive correlation between the indicators of teachers' religious role with students' religious practices. The results revealed that if teachers are reflected themselves as role model of practicing the religion, the religious

practices of students improved a lot and they also follow their teachers in religious aspects.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Majority of students claimed that they find their teachers as role model of religion and teachers appreciate religious discussion in the class. The students opined that religious role of teachers matters a lot in moral and religious cultivation of young minds. There were majority of students about 66% who claimed that teachers preach to say their prayers regularly. The teachers appreciate to practice religious beliefs among students and told that university invites religious scholars at every religious festival. The teachers give them a time to say their prayers. The students were agreed that teachers remain isolated in any sectarian debate.

They also perceived that teachers nourished the students like spiritual father and they follow their teachers as role model. Majority of students opined that they invite their fellows while going to say prayers and have proud of being religious back ground at home. Most students claimed that their solid religious beliefs were the result of their teachers' preaching. It was evident that female students are more firm to practice religion at university level when compared with male counterparts. It was supported

by²⁶ Iqbal and Javed (2018) and.²⁷ The religious involvement of women with health outcomes is stronger than men²⁸, ²⁹ According to³⁰ research, women reported frequent religious weekly attendance than for men.

It explored that teachers' religious role has a significant impact on students' religious practices in different departments. The IT department students were more religious oriented than that of students in English department. The Education department students found more religious oriented than that of students in English department. The results revealed that if teachers are reflected their selves as role model of practicing the

²⁶Iqbal Asif, & Javed Zahida, *A study of religious orientation and performance among university students*. The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal, 4 No. 2(2018): 99-113.

²⁷ Phil Zuckerman, *Why Are women more religious than men?* (2014). Retrieve on June 25, 2020 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-secular-life/201409/why-are-women-more-religious-men>

²⁸ Ferraro Kenneth. F., & Kelley-Moore Jesseka, A. Religious consolation among men and women: Do health problems spur seeking? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39 (2000): 220-234.

²⁹McCullough, M. E., Hoyt, W. T., Larson, D. B., Koenig, H. G. and Thoresen, C. Religious involvement and mortality: A meta-analytic review. *Health Psychology* 19 No. 3(2000): 211-222.

³⁰William J. Strawbridge, Sarah J. Shema, Richard D. Cohen, & George A. Kaplan, Religious attendance increases survival by improving and maintaining good health behaviors, mental health, and social relationships. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* 23 (2001): 68-74.

religion, the religious practices of students improved a lot and they also follow their teachers in religious aspects. These findings supported the findings of 31Iqbal and Javed (2018) who explored a strong positive relationship in intrinsic, extrinsic and total religious orientation.



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³¹ *Iqbal Asif, & Javed Zahida, A study of religious orientation and performance among university students. The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal, 4 No. 2(2018): 99-113.*
