

IMPACT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY ON LIFE CONTENTMENT CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Islamic religiosity on life contentment in the context of Pakistan, where religion significantly shapes individual values, behaviors, and coping mechanisms. Islamic religiosity is understood as a multidimensional construct that includes beliefs, practices, and spiritual experiences influencing daily life. The research adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore how adherence to Islamic teachings contributes to individuals' sense of satisfaction and well-being. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with participants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, focusing on their engagement in religious practices such as Salah (prayer), Sawm (fasting), and reliance on Allah (Tawakkul). The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between Islamic religiosity and life contentment. Participants with higher levels of religious commitment reported greater emotional stability, inner peace, and resilience in facing life challenges. The study concludes that Islamic religiosity functions as an essential psychosocial resource that promotes life contentment in Pakistani society. It emphasizes the importance of incorporating spiritual dimensions into social work practice, mental health interventions, and policy development to ensure holistic well-being.

Keywords: Islamic religiosity, life contentment, Pakistan, well-being, spirituality

A. Introduction:

Life contentment, often conceptualized as life satisfaction or subjective well-being, is a central concern in psychological and social research, particularly within culturally embedded contexts where belief systems shape individual experiences. In Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim society, Islamic religiosity plays a pivotal role in structuring personal identity, moral frameworks, and coping strategies. Religiosity, defined as the degree of commitment to religious beliefs, practices, and values, has been widely associated with psychological well-being and life satisfaction across diverse populations². However, the specific influence of Islamic religiosity on life contentment remains an area requiring deeper contextual exploration, particularly within the socio-cultural dynamics of Pakistan³.

Islam is not merely a set of beliefs but a comprehensive way of life that governs ethical, social, and psychological dimensions. Empirical evidence suggests that religion significantly shapes individuals' perceptions of happiness, purpose, and emotional resilience⁴. In Pakistan, religiosity is deeply ingrained in everyday life, with individuals actively engaging in religious practices such as daily prayers and communal worship, making it a critical variable in understanding subjective well-being⁵.

The concept of life contentment is closely linked to subjective well-being, encompassing cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction and affective experiences of emotions⁶. Scholars argue that religiosity contributes to life contentment by providing meaning, coherence, and existential security⁷. Within Islamic teachings, concepts such as Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), and Tawakkul (trust in Allah) foster psychological stability and

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² Aydin, M., Ekinci, N., & Sahin, E., "Religious involvement and subjective well-being: A cross-cultural perspective", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 22, no.4, (2021), pp. 1845–1863.

³ Abu-Raiya, Hisham, and Kenneth I. Pargament. "Religiosity and Well-being: A Review of Literature in Muslim Contexts." *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, vol. 14, no. 1, (2020), pp. 1-12

⁴ Ellison, Christopher G., "Religion, spirituality, and well-being", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 47, pp. 139–161.

⁵ Ahmed, Salman, and Farhan Siddiqui, "Religion and social cohesion in Pakistan: Effects on subjective well-being", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 43, no. 0), pp. 45–61.

⁶ Seligman, Martin E. P., "Positive Psychology and the Well-being Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 75-80.

⁷ Park, Crystal L., "Meaning-Making in the Context of Trauma and Stress", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Vol. 38, 2021, pp. 31-35

resilience⁸. From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between religiosity and life contentment can be explained through several frameworks. Meaning-making theory suggests that religion helps individuals interpret life events and reduce uncertainty⁹. Similarly, the stress-buffering hypothesis proposes that religiosity mitigates stress through coping mechanisms such as prayer and social support¹⁰. These mechanisms are deeply embedded in Islamic practices, strengthening their protective role against distress¹¹. Research consistently demonstrates a positive association between religiosity and well-being. Higher religious involvement is linked with lower depression and anxiety and higher life satisfaction¹². Religious practices such as prayer contribute to emotional regulation and stress reduction¹³. These findings are especially relevant in Muslim societies where religion is central to daily life¹⁴.

In Pakistan, socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and urban stressors create psychological burdens. Islamic religiosity often serves as a coping resource, providing hope and meaning¹⁵. Religiosity enhances resilience by fostering optimism, social connectedness, and divine reliance¹⁶. This is particularly significant in collectivist cultures where religion strengthens social cohesion¹⁷. Religiosity in Islam is multidimensional, including belief (Iman), practice (Ibadah), knowledge (Ilm), and moral conduct (Akhlaq). This multidimensionality influences emotional well-being and social behavior¹⁸. Adherence to Islamic values promotes ethical conduct and accountability, contributing to life satisfaction¹⁹.

Despite positive associations, some studies report mixed findings. Certain rigid or fear-based religious beliefs may negatively affect well-being²⁰. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity is crucial, as intrinsic religiosity is more strongly linked with positive outcomes²¹.

Gender and socio-economic differences also influence religiosity and well-being. Women often derive emotional support from religious practices, while men experience

⁸ Hassan, Mariam, "Islamic Values and Psychological Stability." *Journal of Islamic Studies & Culture* 10, no. 1 (2022).

⁹ Park, Crystal L, "Meaning-Making in the Context of Trauma and Stress", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Vol.38, 2021, pp. 31-35

¹⁰ Ano, Gene G., and Erin B. Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis", *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 76, no. 4, 2020, pp. 241-255.

¹¹ Abdel-Khalek, Ahmed M, "Religiosity, Health, and Well-being in Muslim Samples", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 24, no. 5, 2021, pp. 450-465.

¹² Lim, Chaeyoon, and Robert D. Putnam, "Religion, Social Networks, and Life Satisfaction", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 85, no. 6, 2020, pp. 499-523.

¹³ Aydin, Gorkem, et al, "Islamic Practices and Mental Health: A Global Perspective", *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 60, no. 3, 2021, pp. 1890-1905.

¹⁴ Hassan, A., "Islamic values and life satisfaction: A review of empirical evidence. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*", vol. 16, no. 1, 2022, pp. 33-49.

¹⁵ Ali, Murtaza, and Fatima Gul, "Faith as a Shield: Religious Coping in Urban Pakistan", *Spiritual Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, pp. 33-48.

¹⁶ Mahmood, T., & Saleem, R., "Islamic mobile applications and youth religiosity: Effects on well-being", *Digital Religion Studies*, vol. 2, no.1, 2023, pp. 45-62.

¹⁷ Ahmed, Salman, and Farhan Siddiqui, "Social Cohesion and Subjective Well-being in Pakistan", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2023, pp. 112-125

¹⁸ Khan, Zeba, and Paul J. Watson, "Multidimensionality of Islamic Religiosity", *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2021, pp. 3-20

¹⁹ Umer, Mohammed, and Salman Khan, "Socio-economic disparities in religious engagement and life satisfaction", *Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2022, pp. 101-118.

²⁰ Exline, Julie J., et al, "Religious and Spiritual Struggles and Their Impact on Life Satisfaction", *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2020, pp. 902-919

²¹ Ryan, Richard M., et al., "Intrinsic Motivation and Religious Internalization", *Self and Identity* vol. 21, no. 1, 2022, pp. 111-124

religiosity differently due to societal roles²². Socio-economic status further shapes access to religious resources and coping strategies.²³ Positive psychology highlights spirituality as a key factor in well-being. Meaning and purpose are central to life satisfaction, often derived from religion²⁴. Islamic teachings emphasize purposeful living, aligning with psychological theories of meaning-making²⁵. The communal aspect of Islam enhances life contentment through social support and belongingness. Practices like congregational prayers and Ramadan strengthen social ties²⁶. In Pakistan, these communal interactions significantly contribute to well-being²⁷. Technological advancements have also influenced religiosity, especially among youth. Digital Islamic platforms facilitate religious engagement and spiritual growth.²⁸ While helpful, they do not fully replace traditional practices²⁹.

Understanding Islamic religiosity is crucial for social work and mental health interventions in Pakistan. Faith-based approaches can enhance cultural relevance and effectiveness.³⁰

Despite extensive research, there is a lack of context-specific studies in Muslim societies. Most literature is Western-based, limiting applicability³¹. This study addresses this gap by focusing on Pakistan. Islamic religiosity significantly contributes to life contentment by providing meaning, resilience, and social support. However, its impact varies based on context and individual differences³².

B. Problem Statement

The growing body of research on religiosity and psychological well-being, the specific relationship between Islamic religiosity and life contentment remains insufficiently explored within the socio-cultural context of Pakistan. While international studies have consistently highlighted the positive role of religiosity in enhancing life satisfaction and emotional resilience, much of this literature is grounded in Western perspectives, which may not fully capture the lived realities of Muslim societies where religion is deeply embedded in daily life and social structures. In Pakistan, individuals face a wide range of socio-economic and psychological challenges, including financial instability, unemployment, academic pressure, and rising urban stress. In such circumstances, Islamic religiosity is often considered a central coping mechanism, providing individuals with spiritual support, moral guidance, and a sense of purpose. However, there is limited qualitative evidence that explores how individuals themselves perceive and experience the role of Islamic teachings and practices in shaping their

²² Batool, Syeda, and Rabia Khalid, "Gender differences in religious coping and life satisfaction: Evidence from Pakistani Muslims", *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 758–771.

²³ Umer, Mohammed, and Salman Khan., "Spiritual well-being. *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 61, no. 5, pp. 3500–3515.

²⁴ Park, Crystal L., "Meaning-Making in the Context of Trauma and Stress" *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 38, 2021, pp. 31–35.

²⁵ Iqbal, F., "Meaning-making in Islamic perspective: Implications for well-being", *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 902–919.

²⁶ Javed, F., & Amjad, N., "Community-based religiosity and subjective well-being: Insights from Pakistan", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 51, no.1, 77–95.

²⁷ Ahmed, T., & Siddiqui, R., "Religion and social cohesion in Pakistan", *Asian Social Science*, vol. 19, no.4, pp. 45–59.

²⁸ Mahmood, Z., & Saleem, S., "Faith and coping", *Pakistan Journal of Psychology*, vol.54, no.1, pp. 67–84.

²⁹ Farooq, M., & Ahmed, R., "Digital religiosity and youth well-being in Pakistan", *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, vol.8, no.2, pp. 101–117.

³⁰ Ali, S., & Gul, R., "Islamic practices and emotional resilience: Evidence from Pakistan", *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, vol. 16, no.2, pp. 55–71.

³¹ Abu-Raiya, Hisham, and Kenneth I., "Pargament. Psychology of Islam. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 23 no.1, pp. 1–12

³² Abdel-Khalek, Ahmed M., "Religiosity, Health, and Well-being in Muslim Samples", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* vol. 24, no. 5, 2021, pp. 450-465.

life contentment. Existing studies tend to rely on quantitative measures, which may overlook the depth, meanings, and personal interpretations associated with religiosity.

Furthermore, Islamic religiosity is a multidimensional construct encompassing beliefs, practices, and ethical values, yet there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding which specific dimensions most significantly contribute to life contentment. Variations based on gender, socio-economic status, and individual differences further complicate this relationship, highlighting the need for an in-depth, context-specific exploration.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by employing a qualitative case study approach to explore how Islamic religiosity influences life contentment among individuals in Pakistan. By focusing on personal experiences, meanings, and interpretations, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding that can inform culturally relevant social work practices, mental health interventions, and policy development.

C. Research Objectives

The researcher aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore how Islamic religiosity influences individuals' perceptions of life contentment in Pakistan.
- To examine the role of religious practices (e.g., prayer, fasting, supplication) in promoting emotional well-being.
- To investigate how Islamic beliefs and values (e.g., Sabr, Shukr, Tawakkul) shape coping strategies during life challenges.

D. Research Questions

- How does Islamic religiosity influence individuals' perceptions of life contentment in Pakistan?
- In what ways do religious practices, such as prayer, fasting, and supplication, promote emotional well-being?
- How do Islamic beliefs and values, including Sabr, Shukr, and Tawakkul, shape individuals' coping strategies during life challenges?

E. Significance of the Study

Understanding the influence of Islamic religiosity on life contentment holds significant value for both academic research and practical applications in Pakistan. First, the study provides insights into the psychological and emotional dimensions of religiosity, offering a deeper understanding of how Islamic beliefs and practices contribute to subjective well-being in a predominantly Muslim society. By exploring personal experiences and interpretations, the study fills a critical gap left by previous quantitative research that often overlooks the nuanced meanings individuals attach to their religious practices.

Second, the findings have practical implications for mental health interventions. Professionals working in Pakistan can integrate religious and spiritual dimensions into counseling, therapy, and community programs, making interventions culturally relevant and more effective. Recognizing the role of Islamic religiosity as a coping resource can enhance strategies to support individuals facing stressors such as socio-economic challenges, urban pressures, or personal crises.

Third, the study contributes to policy development and community programs by highlighting the importance of religion-based support systems. Understanding the communal and social aspects of religiosity can inform initiatives that strengthen social cohesion, resilience, and collective well-being, particularly in areas facing high psychological and social stress. The study adds to the academic literature on religion and well-being by providing a context-specific, qualitative perspective from Pakistan. It advances theoretical understanding

by linking Islamic religiosity with life contentment, emotional resilience, and coping mechanisms, offering a framework for future research in Muslim-majority societies.

F. Literature Review

1. Concept of Life Contentment

Life contentment, often conceptualized as life satisfaction or subjective well-being, represents a person's overall evaluation of their life, incorporating both cognitive judgments and emotional experiences³³. Subjective well-being combines positive affect, life satisfaction, and low negative affect, reflecting the balance of emotions alongside reflective assessments of life circumstances. Life contentment is influenced by multiple factors, including personal values, social relationships, cultural norms, and spiritual beliefs³⁴. In collectivist societies such as Pakistan, individual satisfaction is not isolated from family, community, and societal expectations. The integration of religious adherence in daily life further shapes how individuals perceive fulfillment, making life contentment a multidimensional construct influenced by both internal evaluations and external social context³⁵. Research indicates that meaningful engagement, alignment with personal and moral values, and supportive social networks enhance life satisfaction, emphasizing the role of both subjective perceptions and structural support in achieving overall well-being.

2. Religiosity and Well-Being

Religiosity is a multidimensional construct encompassing commitment to beliefs, regular engagement in practices, adherence to moral values, and acquisition of spiritual knowledge³⁶. Across various cultures, studies consistently demonstrate a positive association between religiosity and psychological well-being, including enhanced resilience and life satisfaction³⁷. Religious beliefs provide a framework for meaning-making, helping individuals interpret life events, reduce existential anxiety, and cope effectively with stressors³⁸. In contexts where daily challenges are prevalent, religiosity functions as both a personal anchor and a source of social guidance, enabling individuals to align their behaviors with ethical principles while maintaining emotional stability.

3. Islamic Religiosity

Islamic religiosity represents a comprehensive way of life, integrating faith (Iman), practice (Ibadah), knowledge (Ilm), and moral conduct (Akhlaq) into daily living³⁹. Core religious practices such as Salah (prayer), fasting during Ramadan, supplication (Dua), and remembrance of Allah (Dhikr) contribute to emotional regulation, stress reduction, and psychological resilience⁴⁰. Islamic values including Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), and Tawakkul (trust in Allah) provide frameworks for interpreting adversity, offering hope and motivation during challenging circumstances⁴¹. The holistic nature of Islamic religiosity

³³ Diener, Ed, Shigehiro Oishi, and Louis Tay, "Advances in Subjective Well-being Research", *Nature Human Behaviour*, vol. 2, 2018, 253–260.

³⁴ Seligman, Martin E. P. *Positive Psychology and the Well-being Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

³⁵ Ahmed, Salman, and Farhan Siddiqui, "Social Cohesion and Subjective Well-being in Pakistan", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2023, pp. 112-125.

³⁶ Koenig, Harold G., "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications", *ISRN Psychiatry*, 2020, pp. 1-23.

³⁷ Ano, Gene G., and Erin B. Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis", *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 76, no. 4, 2020, pp. 241-255.

³⁸ Pargament, Kenneth I., *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice*, (New York: Guilford Press, 2021).

³⁹ Rizvi, Syed, and Moazzam Hossain, "Islamic religiosity and psychological well-being: Evidence from South Asia", *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 87–102.

⁴⁰ Mahmood, Z., & Saleem, S., "Faith and coping." *Pakistan Journal of Psychology*, vol.54, no. 1, 2023, pp. 67–84.

⁴¹ Ali, Murtaza, and Fatima Gul, "Faith as a Shield: Religious Coping in Urban Pakistan", *Spiritual Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, pp. 33-48.

integrates spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, which collectively enhance life satisfaction and contentment, especially in societies where religion is central to identity formation and social interactions.

4. Religious Coping and Resilience

Religion is frequently employed as a coping mechanism, helping individuals manage life stress, adversity, and uncertainty⁴². In Islamic contexts, religious coping involves practices such as prayer, consultation of religious texts, and reliance on divine support to navigate personal and social challenges. Studies indicate that Muslims engaging in regular religious coping report higher levels of emotional well-being, optimism, and life satisfaction⁴³. Additionally, religiosity fosters social support networks by connecting individuals to faith communities, reinforcing social cohesion, and providing resources for collective resilience⁴⁴. These coping mechanisms not only buffer psychological distress but also promote adaptive functioning in contexts characterized by socio-economic hardships or social instability.

5. Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Religiosity

Research highlights that the quality and orientation of religiosity significantly affect its impact on well-being. Intrinsic religiosity, characterized by internalized faith and genuine commitment, is strongly associated with higher life satisfaction, lower anxiety, and adaptive coping⁴⁵. In contrast, extrinsic religiosity, which is motivated by social approval or material benefits, may not confer the same psychological advantages and, in some cases, may be linked to elevated stress or reduced life satisfaction⁴⁶. Understanding this distinction is critical in qualitative studies, as it allows researchers to capture the nuanced experiences of individuals whose engagement with religion may be either deeply personal or socially driven.

6. Gender and Socio-Economic Variations

Gender roles and socio-economic status shape how religiosity affects life contentment. Women in Pakistan frequently derive emotional support and social cohesion through religious practices, while men's engagement may reflect societal responsibilities and occupational expectations⁴⁷. Socio-economic disparities also influence access to religious education, community participation, and material resources that support spiritual engagement, which in turn affects overall life satisfaction⁴⁸. Considering these variations is crucial for understanding the diversity of experiences among Pakistani Muslims and for designing culturally sensitive interventions that enhance well-being.

7. Communal and Social Dimensions of Islam

Islamic communal practices, including congregational prayers, participation in Ramadan events, and attendance at religious gatherings, foster a sense of belonging, social

⁴² Ano, Gene G., and Erin B. Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis" *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 76, no. 4, 2020, pp. 241-255.

⁴³ Farooq, M., & Ahmed, R., "Digital religiosity and youth well-being in Pakistan" *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, vol.8, no. 2, 2022, pp. 101-117.

⁴⁴ Lim, Chaeyoon, and Robert D. Putnam. "Religion, Social Networks, and Life Satisfaction." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 85, no. 3, 2020, pp. 499-523.

⁴⁵ Ryan, Richard M., et al., "Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity: Implications for life satisfaction", *Personality and Individual Differences*, 185, 2022, pp. 111-124.

⁴⁶ Exline, Julie J., et al., "Religious and Spiritual Struggles and Their Impact on Life Satisfaction", *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2020, pp. 1-13.

⁴⁷ Lim, Chaeyoon, and Robert D. Putnam., "Religion, Social Networks, and Life Satisfaction." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 85, no. 6, 2020, pp. 499-523

⁴⁸ Umer, Mohammed, and Salman Khan., "Spiritual well-being", *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 61, no. 5, 2022, 3500-3515.

cohesion, and mutual support⁴⁹. Social integration through religious networks has been shown to significantly enhance life satisfaction and emotional well-being⁵⁰. In Pakistan, where family and community structures are central, these communal dimensions of religiosity provide both practical support and emotional reassurance, reinforcing resilience and promoting contentment.

8. Technological Influence on Religiosity

The increasing use of digital platforms and Islamic mobile applications has transformed religious engagement, especially among younger populations. These tools facilitate access to religious knowledge, help maintain daily practices, and foster participation in online spiritual communities⁵¹. While digital platforms enhance motivation and convenience, they complement rather than replace traditional practices, which remain essential for deep psychological and emotional support. The integration of technology highlights the evolving nature of religiosity and its impact on life satisfaction in contemporary contexts.

G. Research Gap

Although studies highlight a positive association between religiosity and life satisfaction, there is a notable absence of qualitative, context-specific research in Pakistan exploring the lived experiences of Islamic religiosity. Much of the existing literature is Western-centric and quantitative, which may not fully capture the personal meanings, coping strategies, and spiritual interpretations of Pakistani Muslims⁵². A qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences, providing rich insights into how Islamic religiosity influences life contentment, resilience, and subjective well-being.

H. Theoretical Framework

To explain the connection between Islamic religiosity and life contentment, this study is grounded in two complementary theories: Meaning-Making Theory and Religious Coping Theory. These frameworks help clarify how individuals interpret life experiences, respond to stress, and derive psychological stability from their religious beliefs and practices.

According to Meaning-Making Theory, individuals actively construct meaning when they encounter life events, particularly those that challenge their expectations or emotional equilibrium. This theoretical perspective posits that personal interpretations significantly influence subjective well-being. Meaning-making involves integrating life experiences with personal belief systems, enabling individuals to reorganize their understanding of life challenges in ways that preserve psychological balance and promote well-being⁵³. In the context of this study, Pakistani Muslims draw upon Islamic teachings, moral values, and spiritual practices to interpret life difficulties. By placing life events within the framework of divine purpose and moral order, they derive personal meaning that contributes to life satisfaction and emotional resilience. Research indicates that individuals who successfully make meaning of stressful events report higher levels of life satisfaction and enhanced coping⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ Javed, F., & Amjad, N., "Community-based religiosity and subjective well-being: Insights from Pakistan", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 77–95

⁵⁰ Ahmed, Salman, and Farhan Siddiqui., "Social Cohesion and Subjective Well-being in Pakistan", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2023, pp. 112-125.

⁵¹ Mahmood, T., & Saleem, R., "Islamic mobile applications and youth religiosity: Effects on well-being", *Digital Religion Studies*, vol. 2, no.1, pp. 45–62

⁵² Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I., "Religious coping and psychological well-being: Global perspectives", *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol.12, no.4, 2020, pp. 347–358.

⁵³ Park, Crystal L., "Meaning-Making in the Context of Trauma and Stress", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol.38, 2021, pp. 31-35.

⁵⁴ Park, Crystal L., "Meaning-Making in the Context of Trauma and Stress", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 38, 2021, pp. 31-35.

Complementing this perspective, Religious Coping Theory emphasizes how religious beliefs and practices function as strategies to manage stress, adversity, and uncertainty. Religious coping encompasses behaviors such as prayer, supplication (dua), reliance on divine support (tawakkul), and reading sacred texts, all of which serve to mitigate emotional distress and strengthen psychological resilience⁵⁵. Pargament's model identifies religion as a unique form of coping that provides cognitive frameworks, emotional comfort, and social support, allowing individuals to navigate life challenges in ways that secular coping mechanisms may not fully address. In many Muslim contexts, religious coping strategies are not merely optional but are embedded in daily life, providing believers with continuous access to spiritual support during moments of hardship⁵⁶.

Together, these theories offer a robust foundation for exploring how Islamic religiosity influences life contentment. Meaning-Making Theory explains how belief systems shape the interpretation of life events, while Religious Coping Theory clarifies how religious practices help regulate emotional responses and enhance resilience. By integrating these perspectives, this study examines not just the presence of religious practices but also the cognitive and emotional pathways through which these practices translate into life satisfaction for individuals in Pakistan.

I. Methodology

This study employs a phenomenological research design within a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of Pakistani Muslims and understand the meaning they attach to Islamic religiosity and life contentment. The population consists of adult Pakistani Muslims who actively engage in religious practices, and purposive sampling is used to select participants with relevant experiences. A total of 100 respondents were included to provide diverse perspectives and rich, detailed accounts. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share personal experiences, feelings, and reflections on how religiosity influences their life satisfaction. Thematic analysis was applied to the transcribed interviews, beginning with initial coding of meaningful statements, followed by grouping these codes into broader themes, and refining them to identify connections with research questions and theoretical frameworks. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and using pseudonyms to ensure participant anonymity.

J. Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the impact of Islamic religiosity on life contentment among Pakistani Muslims by examining lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and personal interpretations of faith. The findings strongly support the research objectives and demonstrate that Islamic religiosity plays a significant role in enhancing subjective well-being through multiple psychological and social pathways. In relation to the first research objective, which focused on understanding how Islamic religiosity shapes life contentment, the findings revealed that participants use religious beliefs as a framework for interpreting life events. This aligns with Meaning-Making Theory, which suggests that individuals derive purpose and coherence by integrating life experiences with belief systems (Park, 2010). Participants' emphasis on concepts such as Sabr (patience) and Tawakkul (trust in Allah) reflects how Islamic teachings provide meaning during adversity. These results are consistent with previous

⁵⁵ Ano, Gene G., and Erin B. Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis", *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol.76, no. 4, 2020, pp. 241-255.

⁵⁶ Hansen, N. J., et al., "Spiritual Support in Modern Muslim Contexts", *Journal of Spiritual Health*, vol.19, no. 1, 2024

studies indicating that religion enhances life satisfaction by offering existential purpose and emotional stability⁵⁷.

The second objective examined the role of religious practices in emotional regulation and well-being. The findings showed that practices such as Salah, Dhikr, and Quran recitation significantly contribute to stress reduction and inner peace. This supports earlier research demonstrating that regular religious engagement promotes emotional regulation and psychological well-being⁵⁸. Moreover, these practices function as structured routines that provide consistency and calmness in daily life, which is particularly important in stressful socio-economic environments like Pakistan. Addressing the third objective related to coping mechanisms, the study found that participants heavily rely on religious coping strategies during times of stress and adversity. This finding strongly aligns with Religious Coping Theory, which emphasizes the role of faith-based practices in managing life challenges⁵⁹. Participants reported using Dua, prayer, and reliance on divine support as primary coping strategies, which enhanced resilience and optimism. Similar findings have been reported in Muslim populations, where religiosity is positively associated with adaptive coping and reduced psychological distress⁶⁰. The findings revealed that intrinsic religiosity is more strongly associated with life contentment compared to extrinsic religiosity. Participants who practiced religion out of genuine belief reported greater emotional stability and satisfaction. This supports existing literature suggesting that intrinsic religiosity leads to more positive psychological outcomes, while extrinsic religiosity may have limited or even negative effects⁶¹. This distinction highlights the importance of internalized faith in achieving meaningful well-being.

The study also identified gender and socio-economic variations in the experience of religiosity. Female participants emphasized emotional and social benefits, whereas male participants focused more on moral guidance and discipline. These findings are in line with previous research showing gender differences in religious coping and well-being⁶². Additionally, socio-economic factors influenced access to religious resources, yet religiosity remained a consistent source of support across all groups, reinforcing its universal relevance⁶³. Another important finding relates to the role of technology in shaping modern religiosity. Younger participants reported using digital Islamic platforms to maintain religious engagement, which supports recent studies on digital religiosity and youth well-being⁶⁴. However, participants also emphasized that traditional practices provide deeper emotional and spiritual fulfillment, indicating that technology complements rather than replaces conventional forms of religious engagement. Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with a large body of literature demonstrating a positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction. Islamic religiosity contributes to life contentment by providing meaning, enhancing emotional regulation, strengthening coping mechanisms, and fostering social support. The integration of

⁵⁷ Steger, Michael F., "Wellbeing, Recovery and Mental Health", Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 79

⁵⁸ Ellison, Christopher G., "Religion and Mental Health: Emerging Theories and Research." *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 82, no. 1, 2021, 1-20.

⁵⁹ Pargament, Kenneth I., *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice*. (New York, Guilford Press, 2021)

⁶⁰ Abdel-Khalek, Ahmed M., "Religiosity, Health, and Well-being in Muslim Samples." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol.24, no. 5, 2021, pp. 450-465.

⁶¹ Ryan, Richard M., et al., "Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity: Implications for life satisfaction." *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 185, pp. 111-124.

⁶² Shah, Amira, and Tariq Aziz., "Socio-cultural influences on religiosity and well-being in Pakistan." *Asian Journal of Psychology*, vol. 26, no.1, pp. 34-50.

⁶³ Umer, M., & Khan, A., "Socio-economic disparities in religious engagement and life satisfaction", *Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 101-118.

⁶⁴ Mahmood, T., & Saleem, R., "Islamic mobile applications and youth religiosity: Effects on well-being." *Digital Religion Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 45-62.

Meaning-Making Theory and Religious Coping Theory offers a comprehensive explanation of how these processes operate in the Pakistani context.

K. Findings

Thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews with 100 participants revealed several interconnected themes reflecting how Islamic religiosity influences life contentment. These themes directly address the research objectives and questions by exploring lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and personal interpretations.

1. Islamic Religiosity as a Source of Meaning and Life Interpretation

Participants consistently described religion as a framework through which they interpret life events. Many expressed that Islamic teachings helped them understand hardships as part of a divine plan rather than random misfortune. Concepts such as Sabr (patience) and Tawakkul (trust in Allah) were frequently mentioned as guiding principles that shaped their worldview. For example, one participant explained that difficulties in life are perceived as “tests from Allah,” which reduces frustration and increases acceptance. This meaning-making process allowed participants to maintain psychological balance and develop a sense of purpose, directly contributing to life contentment.

2. Religious Practices as Emotional Regulation Tools

A dominant theme emerging from the data was the role of daily religious practices in managing emotions. Participants reported that Salah (prayer), Dhikr, and recitation of the Quran provided immediate psychological relief during stress and anxiety. Many participants shared that engaging in prayer created a sense of calmness and clarity, especially during challenging situations. These practices acted as structured routines that helped regulate emotional responses, indicating that religiosity plays a practical role in enhancing day-to-day well-being.

3. Religious Coping and Resilience in Adversity

Participants widely relied on religious coping strategies during times of hardship, including financial stress, family issues, and personal loss. Turning to Dua (supplication) and trusting Allah’s plan were commonly described as ways to cope with uncertainty. One recurring pattern was that individuals who actively practiced religious coping demonstrated higher resilience. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, they expressed hope and perseverance. This finding aligns with the research objective of understanding how religiosity supports psychological strength and life satisfaction.

4. Social Connectedness through Religious Engagement

Another important theme was the communal aspect of Islam. Participants highlighted that attending congregational prayers, participating in Ramadan activities, and engaging in religious gatherings strengthened their sense of belonging. These social interactions were not only spiritually fulfilling but also emotionally supportive. Many participants emphasized that being part of a religious community reduced feelings of isolation and enhanced overall life satisfaction, especially in urban environments.

5. Intrinsic Faith as a Key Determinant of Life Contentment

The analysis revealed a clear distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Participants who practiced religion out of genuine belief and personal conviction reported deeper satisfaction, inner peace, and emotional stability. In contrast, those who engaged in religious practices mainly due to societal expectations did not report the same level of contentment. This indicates that the quality of religiosity, rather than mere participation, plays a crucial role in influencing well-being.

6. Gender-Based Differences in Religious Experience

The findings showed noticeable gender differences in how religiosity contributes to life contentment. Female participants often emphasized emotional comfort, stress relief, and social bonding gained through religious practices. Male participants, on the other hand, highlighted guidance, discipline, and moral structure as key benefits of religiosity. These differences suggest that religiosity fulfills diverse psychological and social needs depending on gender roles within Pakistani society.

7. Influence of Socio-Economic Conditions on Religious Engagement

Socio-economic status influenced how participants experienced religiosity. Individuals from relatively stable backgrounds reported structured engagement, such as attending religious lectures or accessing Islamic resources. Participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds relied more on personal faith and informal community networks. Despite these differences, religiosity remained a significant source of comfort and life satisfaction across all groups, indicating its universal relevance.

8. Technology and Modern Expressions of Religiosity

Younger participants highlighted the role of digital platforms, Islamic apps, and online lectures in maintaining religious engagement. These tools were described as convenient and motivating, especially for busy lifestyles. However, participants also emphasized that digital religiosity could not fully replace traditional practices such as mosque attendance and face-to-face interactions, which provided deeper emotional and spiritual fulfillment.

9. Overall Impact of Islamic Religiosity on Life Contentment

Across all themes, a consistent pattern emerged: Islamic religiosity positively influences life contentment by providing meaning, emotional regulation, coping strategies, and social support. Participants who actively integrated religion into their daily lives reported higher levels of satisfaction, inner peace, and resilience. The findings suggest that religiosity operates through both internal (psychological) and external (social) pathways to enhance overall well-being.

L. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the impact of Islamic religiosity on life contentment within the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, using a qualitative phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of participants. The findings provide compelling evidence that Islamic religiosity is not merely a set of ritual practices but a deeply embedded psychological, social, and spiritual resource that significantly enhances life satisfaction and overall well-being. A key insight emerging from this study is that Islamic religiosity functions as a powerful meaning-making system. Participants consistently interpreted life challenges through the lens of faith, viewing hardships as purposeful and spiritually meaningful rather than arbitrary. This interpretive framework enabled individuals to maintain emotional stability, cultivate patience, and develop a sense of inner peace, even in the face of adversity. Such findings highlight that life contentment in the Pakistani context is closely intertwined with spiritual understanding and belief in divine wisdom.

The study demonstrates that religious practices such as prayer, remembrance of Allah, and supplication play a central role in emotional regulation. These practices provide individuals with structured mechanisms to manage stress, reduce anxiety, and achieve psychological balance. The consistency and discipline embedded in these practices contribute to a sense of control and calmness, reinforcing their importance in daily life. In this regard, Islamic religiosity serves as both a preventive and restorative mechanism for mental well-being.

Another significant contribution of this study is the identification of religious coping as a key pathway through which religiosity enhances resilience. Participants relied heavily on faith-based coping strategies during times of personal, social, and economic challenges. These

strategies not only strengthened their ability to endure hardship but also fostered optimism, hope, and perseverance. The findings thus affirm that religiosity operates as a critical buffer against psychological distress, particularly in contexts characterized by uncertainty and socio-economic pressures.

The communal dimension of Islam also emerged as a vital factor influencing life contentment. Religious gatherings, congregational prayers, and shared spiritual experiences were found to strengthen social bonds and provide emotional support. In a collectivist society like Pakistan, where interpersonal relationships are central, these communal practices significantly enhance feelings of belongingness and social integration, thereby contributing to overall life satisfaction. Importantly, the study highlights that the depth and nature of religiosity matter. Participants who exhibited intrinsic religiosity characterized by sincere belief and internalized faith reported higher levels of contentment compared to those whose religious engagement was externally motivated. This distinction underscores that authentic spiritual connection, rather than mere participation in rituals, is essential for achieving meaningful well-being.

The study also sheds light on variations based on gender and socio-economic factors, revealing that while the expression of religiosity may differ, its positive impact on life contentment remains consistent across diverse groups. Additionally, the emergence of digital religiosity among younger participants indicates that while modern tools facilitate religious engagement, traditional practices continue to hold greater emotional and spiritual significance. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by providing a context-specific, qualitative understanding of how Islamic religiosity shapes life contentment in Pakistan. It underscores that religiosity influences well-being through multiple interconnected pathways, including meaning-making, emotional regulation, coping, and social support. The findings emphasize the need to recognize religion as a vital component of human well-being, particularly in Muslim societies, and highlight its potential role in informing culturally sensitive social work practices and mental health interventions. Islamic religiosity emerges not only as a source of spiritual fulfillment but as a comprehensive system that nurtures psychological resilience, social harmony, and a profound sense of life satisfaction.

M. Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance life contentment through Islamic religiosity, both at individual and community levels:

- Individuals are encouraged to consistently engage in daily prayers (Salah), supplication (Dua), remembrance of Allah (Dhikr), and other acts of worship. These practices not only foster emotional regulation and resilience but also enhance psychological well-being, providing a sustainable source of inner peace and life satisfaction.
- Educational programs, religious seminars, and community workshops should emphasize Islamic concepts such as Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), Tawakkul (trust in Allah), and contentment (Rida). By guiding individuals to interpret life challenges through faith, these initiatives can strengthen coping mechanisms and foster a deeper sense of purpose.
- 3.Participation in congregational prayers, Ramadan activities, Islamic study circles (Halaqas), and charity-based programs (Sadaqah and Waqf) should be encouraged. These communal practices promote social cohesion, mutual support, and a sense of belonging, which are directly linked to life contentment in collectivist societies like Pakistan.
- While mobile apps, online lectures, and digital Qur'an platforms facilitate religious engagement, individuals should balance digital participation with traditional practices. Guidance should be provided on using technology as a tool for spiritual enrichment rather than a replacement for personal and communal worship.

- Emphasis should be placed on internalizing faith and cultivating sincerity (Ikhlas) in religious practice. Programs and religious counseling should encourage reflective worship, personal devotion, and moral accountability, ensuring that religiosity is an authentic source of psychological and spiritual well-being.
- Families and educators should encourage the younger generation to adopt Islamic values in daily life, integrating faith with personal goals and emotional development. Mentorship programs or family-based religious guidance can nurture resilience, optimism, and contentment from an early age.
- Communities should establish mentorship systems, elder-youth support circles, and faith-based discussion groups to facilitate emotional and spiritual support. Such networks can help individuals navigate challenges, reduce stress, and maintain life satisfaction in line with Islamic principles.
- Religious education should address the importance of intrinsic over extrinsic religiosity, warning against fear-based or rigid interpretations that may negatively affect psychological well-being. Encouraging balanced and compassionate faith can maximize the positive impact of religiosity on life contentment.
- By implementing these recommendations, individuals and communities can harness the full potential of Islamic religiosity to promote emotional resilience, purposeful living, and enduring life satisfaction, ensuring that faith becomes a practical guide for daily well-being.

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