

A GENDER COMPARATIVE STUDY ON TIME MANAGEMENT AND ADHERENCE TO RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between effective time management and adherence to religious practices, focusing on gender influence. The objective of the study is to examine how an individual's time management behaviors align with their religious commitments and practices, and if gender influences this alignment. By exploring the association between time management, adherence to religious practices, and gender influence, this research investigates how individuals of different genders manage their time within the context of their religious adherence. The study adopts a quantitative research approach by using the survey as an instrument to gather data from participants representing a diverse group. The analysis focuses on a gender comparison of the understanding and implementation of time management behavior and practices and their influence on adherence to religious practices. The findings would contribute to a deeper understanding of the differences if any exists between the gender's behavior toward the concept of time management and its influence on their ability to balance religious commitments with other aspects of their life.

Keywords: *Time management, work-life balance, gender comparison research, religious adherence, quantitative research.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The association of “time” with any human undertaking is clearly evident from the obvious reflection that all intellectual, religious, emotional, and developmental pursuits require time. Effective time management plays a significant role in influencing an individual’s efficiency, well-being, and overall quality of life. Similarly, religion plays a pivotal role in driving the individual’s life as it defines the meaning and purpose of life (Chamberlain and Zikka, 1992). As explained by Hanler and Genz (2005), an individual’s attitude toward religion and adherence to religious practices could derive high satisfaction as religion provides the code of conduct for life. The alignment of time management and adherence to religious practices presents a complex dynamic that would be further studied through the lens of gender, in this research.

In recent years, a significant rise has been observed in the theoretical and practical publications on the importance of time management. An evidently increasing need and recognition of the significance of time and its management is reflected in literary studies (Garhammer, 2002; Wright, 2002). It has also been observed that the notion of time, its perception, and its management has been studied from a conventional perspective with more ethical references rather than religious implications (Kabiru, 2003). With religion playing a crucial role in an individual’s life in today’s world, its influence is clearly evident in their life. Religious practices provide a framework for organizing time to strike a balance between different aspects of life - one of those being adherence to religious practices. Furthermore, there is very limited research that systematically

investigated how gender influences adherence to religious practices with time management as a significant factor.

Gender, as a social construct, intensively and extensively influences human behavior and individual experiences in varied aspects of life. It evidently impacts time perception, expectations, and time management practices. It also influences the religious experiences of an individual. Exploring gender differences in time management strategies and their impact on adherence to religious practices is essential for understanding the unique challenges faced in managing time effectively to adhere to religious practices and formulating gender-based strategies to overcome these challenges.

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate the relationship between time management and adherence to religious practices through the lens of gender factors. The main objectives of this research are to: a) identify the relationship between time management and adherence to religious practices, and, b) investigate the influence of gender factors on the findings of these factors. This study considers three demographic factors: age, gender, and country with a high emphasis on gender. The age group studied is youth in the age range of 20 – 40 from India and Pakistan. The main focus is to explore the role played by gender in influencing time management practices in both religious and non-religious aspects. The religious practices under investigation include (i) adherence to daily rituals of worship (ii) offering salah on a daily basis (iii) reciting Quran daily (iv) engaging in community work (v) performing voluntary acts of worship and (vi) commitment to the religion.

The rationale of this study is based on three main factors. First, the existing literature has contradictory findings on the influence of gender on the effectiveness of time management. For instance, in their research (Khanam, Rao and Quazi, 2017), found no difference between the general time management practices of the two genders. Whereas, the research finding of (Alsalem, Alamodi and Jabri, 2017), indicated that females are better than males in the management of time. Therefore, the current research validates the need for further research in this area. Second, there is a scarcity of statistical evidence on the association between managing time effectively and adherence to religious practices. Therefore, this study is focused on determining if there exists an association between these two variables. Third, it is significant to acknowledge that religious practices differ and are not applicable universally. An individual's adherence to religious practices is influenced by multiple factors and gender could be one among them. Therefore, this study explores the impact of gender on adherence to religious practices.

Thus, in the following pages, at first time management and adherence to religious practices in the context of gender is being discussed, and presented by its theoretical framework. Thereafter, the research methodology is elaborated and the analysis is presented. Finally, the findings and discussions conclude the paper.

2. Review of Literature

Time management and level of religiosity (in terms of adherence to religious practices) are two significant aspects of an individual's life. Hence, there is a vast amount of literature

available in these areas. However, limited literature discusses the alignment between time management and adherence to religious practices specifically in lieu of gender comparison. Interestingly, both time management and level of religiosity amongst individuals have been studied individually and extensively in lieu of gender.

2.1 Time Management

Time Management is a form of self-management with a high emphasis on the effective utilization of time (Savino, 2016). Effective management of time in an individual's life is linked to achieving success and quality of life (Pugh & Nathwani, 2017). As propounded by (Claessens et al, 2007), time management provides individuals the ways to systematically structure and control their tasks and activities. Effective management of time produces better outcomes while lack of time management results in low productivity and negative outcomes (Hellsten, 2012). These views reveal that time is a significant factor and a valuable resource that if utilized effectively would impact positively an individual's development.

The core principles of time management include setting goals, prioritizing tasks, planning, scheduling, delegating tasks, and eliminating time wasters. Planning is considered to be the most significant component of time management (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017). Therefore, individuals irrespective of age and gender who have established goals and objectives, derived priorities, and plan the best way to utilize time usually outperform others in all aspects of their life.

2.2 Time Management in Religion Perspectives

All the religious scriptures highlight the significance of time in human life. Time management plays a significant role in observing religious practices. In Islam, the value attributed to time is of great significance which is reflected both in the verses of the Quran and acts of Sunnah. The context in which time is referred to in the Islamic scriptures covers a broader extent beginning from defining the duration of the creation and ending at the reckoning and accounting of the created beings for their time utilization (Jabnoun, 2001).

The success of a Muslim believer in this life and the hereafter is predominantly determined by the successful utilization of time in his/her living period. Every human being born is assigned a limited amount of time to live in this world. It is the scarcest resource whose characteristic includes equality (Al-Jeraisy, 2002). The way of living for a Muslim should be unique in a manner that it is in adherence to the religious principles that guide to a perfect life – wherein beliefs and practices are interlocked, and a perfect harmony is found between secular and religious activities (Laeheem & Baka, 2010). However, we are witnessing a tremendous change in Muslim living today which could be attributed to the rise in technological advancements affecting the Muslim way of life in various ways. Therefore, it is the need of the moment to study the association between time management and religious adherence for individual benefit and community benefit at large.

2.3 Gender Influence

There are gender-based research studies on effective time management practices. Misra and McKean (2000) propounded

through their study on the investigation of the relationship between time management and academic factors that female students are more effective in utilizing time management skills than male students. This finding was supported by Lokam (2007) in his study where he demonstrated that females possess a higher ability to manage time than males. However, Saketi and Taheri (2010) found no difference between genders in terms of time management skills in their research study.

Similarly, in the studies related to religious adherence, it was investigated and found that females are more adherent to religious practices than males (Stark 2002, Hackett, Murphy and Mc Clendon, 2016). It was observed by Baker (2008) that females are more frequent in offering religious practices, such as prayers than their male counterparts. It was also found that women are more publicly religious and are more associated with community centers and religious organizations than men (Batson, Schoenrade & Larry, 1993). The research on measuring the level of religiosity also largely focuses on the factors that motivate or demotivate men and women to engage in religious activities (Baker & Whitehead, 2016; Djupe, Neiheisel, & Sokhey, 2018).

Despite the significance of effective management of time in adherence to religious practices, there is a scarcity of research in this area. The current study aims to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the association between time management and adherence to religious practices. Furthermore, by studying the influence of gender on this association, the study would be contributing to an area of study that is unexplored.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The present study is deep-rooted in the Pickle Jar theory of time management. This theory was propounded by Jeremy Wright (Olubor & Osunde, 2007). Based on this theory, time is similar to a Pickle Jar in its limitedness. An individual's life is the jar and what it consists of in volume or space is limited in its nature. We fill our days with different levels of activities, those that are important and also not important. The Pickle Jar Theory acts as a visual metaphor that helps an individual determine the daily tasks that are important, less important, and not important. This theory is established in this study based on the fact that an individual's life is filled with different activities, family responsibilities, work responsibilities, religious responsibilities, social interactions, and so on. According to this theory, an individual should develop a balance between all these set responsibilities based on priority setting. They should be allocating time daily for all the tasks to become successful in this life and afterlife considering their level of religiosity.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The three primary factors have been taken into consideration as potential variables to build the conceptual framework for the present research. As illustrated in the below diagram, the dependent variable in this study is adherence to religious practices. The two independent variables are time management behavior and gender construct.

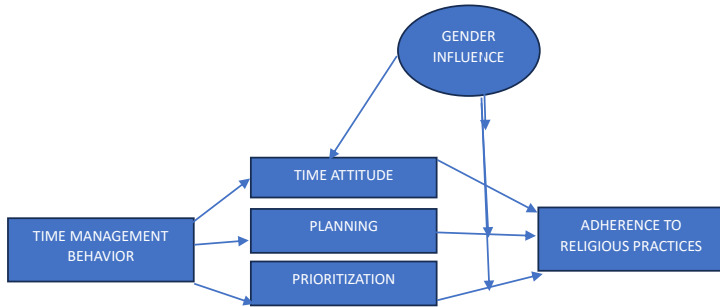


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

The participants of this research comprised 117 respondents from two different countries (India and Pakistan) derived by applying a random sampling technique. The data was collected through an online questionnaire that was mainly distributed to the students of an online Islamic institution. The survey questionnaire asked for three demographic variables - age, gender, and country. It was further categorized into two sections A and B. Section A lists the questions related to general time management practices and Section B listed the questions related to adherence to religious practices. The Likert scale was used to gather the respondents' views on the listed questions. In this study, the responses would be analyzed through the gender factor and the overall data would be analyzed using descriptive statistics namely Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test.

4. ANALYSIS

The analysis consists of three sections. The first part measures the association between time management practices and adherence to religious practices, the second part measures gender-based responses to time management practices, and the third part investigates the gender-based responses to adherence to religious practices.

4.1 Relationship between Time Management and Adherence to Religious Practices

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between time management and adherence to religious practices. There was a positive correlation found between the two variables, $r(115) = .41, p < .00001$.

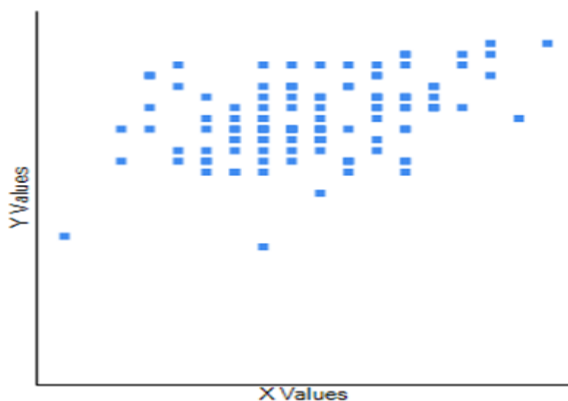


Figure 2. Linear relationship between time management and adherence to religious practices

4.2 Overall Level of Time Management Understanding

As depicted in Table 1, the results of the study show that the respondents reported on average a moderate level of understanding and adherence to time management practices ($X = 3.16$, $SD = 0.70$).

Table 1. Level of Time Management Understanding & Implementation

Time Management Behavior	M	SD	Level
PLANNING			
I have goals and ambitions in life	3.66	0.51	High
I prepare a list of tasks & activities that I have to do each day	2.93	0.77	Moderate
I plan all aspects of my day before I start it	2.97	0.71	Moderate
PRIORITISATION			
I prioritize tasks based on their timelines	3.16	0.66	Moderate
I maintain a work-life balance	3.04	0.71	Moderate
TIME ATTITUDE			
I am conscious of time-wasting activities	3.26	0.80	Moderate
I am easily distracted and spend time on leisure activities	2.97	0.77	Moderate
I make a conscious effort to utilize time effectively each day	3.32	0.65	Moderate
Average	3.16	0.70	Moderate

4.3 Gender-based Comparison on the Level of Time Management Understanding

Table 2 illustrates the comparison of time management understanding between male and female respondents. The results of the t-test show no statistically significant difference between the two gender categories in understanding and adhering to the overall time management practices ($p < 0.05$). However, it has been observed that there is a statistically significant difference in three parameters related to planning ($p=.018$), prioritizing ($p=.009$), and consciously utilizing time ($p=.025$). Female respondents demonstrated a higher level of skills related to planning and prioritizing the daily tasks and activities. There was no difference noted between the gender in all the remaining five aspects.

Table 2. Gender-based comparison on the level of time management understanding

Time Management Behavior	Female (n=67)		Male (n=50)		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
PLANNING						
I have goals and ambitions in life	3.61	0.55	3.72	0.45	-1.13	0.129
I prepare a list of tasks & activities that I have to do each day	3.06	0.72	2.76	0.82	2.10	0.018
I plan all aspects of my day before I start it	3.15	0.63	2.74	0.75	3.19	0.009
PRIORITIZATION						
I prioritize tasks based on their timelines	3.15	0.66	3.18	0.66	-0.24	0.401

I maintain a work-life balance							
TIME ATTITUDE	2.97	0.74	3.14	0.67	-1.28	0.101	
I am conscious of time-wasting activities	3.33	0.70	3.16	0.91	1.12	0.131	
I am easily distracted and spend time on leisure activities	2.90	0.82	3.08	0.70	-1.28	0.100	
I make a conscious effort to utilize time effectively each day	3.42	0.55	3.18	0.68	1.97	0.025	
Average	3.20	0.67	3.12	0.71	0.56	0.11	

4.4 Overall Level of Adherence to Religious Practices

As observed in Table 3, the results of the study show that the respondents reported a moderate level of adherence to religious practices ($X = 3.06$, $SD = 0.73$).

Table 3. Level of Adherence to Religious Practices

Religious Practices	M	SD	Level
I adhere to daily rituals of worship	3.36	0.55	High
I pray five times a day (salah)	3.10	0.86	Moderate
I recite the Quran daily	2.76	0.78	Moderate
I am engaged in community development work	2.60	0.78	Moderate
I make a conscious effort to do voluntary acts of worship	3.21	0.67	Moderate

I make a conscious effort to offer my prayers at their beginning time.	3.21	0.69	Moderate
I consider myself fully committed to religion	3.15	0.77	Moderate
Average	3.06	0.73	Moderate

4.5 Gender-based Comparison on the Adherence of Religious Practices

Illustrated in Table 4, is the gender-based comparison on adherence to religious practices. The results of the t-test indicate no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents in six of the seven parameters related to religious practice adherence ($p < 0.05$). There is a statistically significant difference observed in the results for praying five times a day ($p=0.007$) indicating that females are better than males in it. There is no statistically significant difference noted between the gender in the remaining categories.

Table 4. Gender-based Comparison on Adherence to Religious Practices

Religious Practices	Female (n=67)		Male (n=50)		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
I adhere to daily rituals of worship	3.42	0.55	3.28	0.54	1.34	0.089
I pray five times a day (salah)	3.27	0.79	2.88	0.92	2.45	0.007

I recite the Quran daily	2.82	0.80	2.68	0.77	0.96	0.169
I am engaged in community development work	2.60	0.80	2.60	0.78	-	0.491
I make a conscious effort to do voluntary acts of worship	3.19	0.56	3.22	0.58	-	0.403
I make a conscious effort to offer my prayers at their beginning time.	3.24	0.70	3.16	0.68	0.61	0.271
I consider myself fully committed to religion	3.12	0.75	3.18	0.80	-	0.337
Average	3.09	0.71	3.00	0.72	0.67	0.25

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between effective time management and adherence to religious practices. Further, it explored the gender-based comparison of the understanding and implementation of time management practices and adherence to religious practices. The results are as discussed below.

5.1 Analysis of the relationship between time management and adherence to religious practices

The findings of the positive association found between the two variables are consistent with the existing research that effective

time management influences the religious and spiritual levels in an individual's life (Jensen, Jordan R. & Neck, Christopher P. 2017). The association of time is clearly evident from the general reflection that it takes "time" to pursue any intellectual, religious, emotional, etc. endeavors. The seriousness of the time could even be understood by acknowledging that it has been referred to as one of the most important resources in all religious scriptures. However, it has to be noted that effective management of time is only of the few factors that affect the levels of adherence to religious practices. A few of these factors are family (Gunay, 1992), spiritual awakening (Aydin, 2003), religious knowledge, sense of religion, and religious feelings (Oruc, 2010).

5.2 Gender Comparison on Understanding & Implementation of Time Management Practices

Although the existing research studies strongly indicate that females have stronger time management abilities than males, the current study's findings say otherwise. The findings of the current study are in alignment with the findings of Saketi and Taheri (2010) who found no difference between genders in terms of possessing time management skills. People are becoming more time conscious which is the result of the advancement in the efforts made by motivational speakers, consultants, and business coaches who are frequently delivering numerous public speeches, workshops, and seminars on time management. This is supported by the outcome of the no significant difference found between individuals making a conscious effort to utilize time effectively each day ($p=0.23$).

The only statistically significant findings of the study reflect that males are more inclined towards having goals and ambitions in life. The lower level of goals and ambitions in females could be attributed to the family responsibilities which primarily guide their choices and options in life (Williams & Ceci, 2012). However, it is interesting to note that the current study has found no significant difference between genders in maintaining work-life balance. This again is in agreement with the existing research work which has proven that work-life conflict has no gender bias.

5.3 Gender Comparison on Adherence to Religious Practices

The current research studies documented gender differences in adherence to religious practices while suggesting that women are more into religiousness than men. The present study attempted at finding the gender role in adherence to religious practices is in alignment with the findings of the existing work in two parameters. Female adherence to daily rituals of worship has been found to be at a higher level than male and similar has been the outcome of praying five times daily. No gender differences were found in the outcomes of the other parameters.

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Time management is essential for leading a quality life. Effective time management positively affects all aspects of life including the level of religiosity. By managing time effectively an individual could strike a balance between meeting religious obligations and daily responsibilities. This study shows that there exists a positive relationship between time management

and adherence to religious practices. There are various factors that may affect the effective management of time. The findings of this study confirm that “gender” is not one of these factors i.e., overall gender does not play a significant role in influencing time management attributes or adherence to religious practices. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that gender should not be used as a determining factor to measure the level of an individual’s time management abilities. Time management skills could be developed by anyone, regardless of gender. Effective time management would result in an increase in the level of religiosity which would ultimately result in a better life and a hereafter for a Muslim believer.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is significant to acknowledge that it has limitations that propose further investigation in these areas in future research. The current research focused on a specific age group (20 – 40) from the same geographical region, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The research needs to be expanded to include more age groups specifically youth from different cultural and societal and geographical backgrounds to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of time management on religiosity levels. The study findings highlight the need for further research with more parameters to develop models and frameworks determining the intersection between time management, religious adherence, and gender differences.

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