



## Public and Private Schooling and Religious Socialization in Secondary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Religion is the main component of the Pakistani Education system. It is important to understand the role of schooling in religious socialization of the students. The study aimed to compare the role of public and private schooling in religious socialization of secondary school students. Quantitative research design was followed to achieve the objectives. Researchers developed a 36 items questionnaire to collect data from secondary school students enrolled in public and private secondary schools. The questionnaire consisted of 6 factors including curriculum, teacher, co-curricular activities, school management, class fellows and parents-teacher interaction. The share of the participants was equal for male, female and rural, urban students. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results showed that public and private secondary schools played an important role in promoting religious socialization among students. However, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female secondary school students about their religious socialization at schools.

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## 1. Introduction

Religious socialization is a process in which behaviors, attitudes, and values within the framework of a religious system are learned by a person. It works differently from systemic and organizational support. It makes a form of social interaction, which has the effect of qualification values, especially beneficial for the purpose of educational success. In the process of religious socialization, there are three agents: family, school, and friends (Beckford, 2003). Schooling is a systematic teaching process. Ideally, schools are confident that learning is related to theories, models, concepts, and facts. All these if learnt are potential tools in the hands of the possessor. However, most times, these things are not properly learnt by the supposed learners (Fichter, 1962). School teaches students related to the world around them and equips them with the tools and skills that they will need for future achievement in the area of profession that's why schooling is very important. In school, valuable and reasonable lessons are learned from classrooms, such as social skills, behavior, work ethics to gain personal success. There is an agreement that schools are a peculiar social medium who appreciates the family's foremost impact (Johnson, 2013).

Religious socialization involves continuous personal development, during which individuals gain values and behaviors that help them thrive within their community (Sedgwick, 2014). Exploring the transfer of values can commence with the basic notion of natural progression, which is intertwined with the everyday expression of religious values. In the family setting, parents lead their children through the journey of religious socialization (Peabody, 1913). The factors influencing religious socialization are multifaceted and can vary

significantly based on individual, familial, societal, and cultural contexts. Family dynamics play a pivotal role, as the religious practices and beliefs upheld within the home environment can strongly influence a person's religious identity. Additionally, the broader community, including religious institutions and social networks, contributes to religious socialization by providing opportunities for communal worship, religious education, and the reinforcement of shared beliefs. Educational institutions, such as schools and religious education programs, also play a crucial role in shaping religious socialization by imparting religious teachings and facilitating spiritual development. Furthermore, societal norms, cultural traditions, and exposure to diverse religious perspectives contribute to the complex tapestry of factors that impact religious socialization, ultimately shaping individuals' religious identities and beliefs. Religious socialization through education is a fundamental process through which individuals are introduced to and immersed in the beliefs, practices, and values of a particular religion within an educational environment. This form of socialization occurs through various channels, including religious studies courses, school rituals, and interactions with religious authorities. Educational institutions often serve as key agents in transmitting religious traditions and fostering a sense of community and identity based on faith. The teachings and practices encountered during religious socialization in educational settings can significantly shape individuals' worldviews, moral frameworks, and cultural perspectives. Moreover, this process can contribute to a deeper understanding of one's own faith and an appreciation for diverse religious traditions, thereby playing a crucial role in the holistic development of students.

Schools are one of the first social environments that communicate with the kids, as long as they are not mature. The influence of schools on kids and youth in a society is not only through organized curriculum and proper instructional methods in regular classes, along with this it also affects their habits and attitudes (Taylor, 2010). This is often done through a hidden curriculum. Religious socialization is an ongoing process of personal growth that instills values and behaviors conducive to harmonious coexistence within a community. Religious society generally exerts a positive influence, providing individuals with a framework of rules, values, and a sense of purpose in life. Religious activities in schools highlight the role of students in promoting essential values and behaviors among their peers, emphasizing the school's pivotal role in shaping a religiously conscious society (Brown & Gary, 1991). It is widely acknowledged that religious and cultural factors profoundly impact the lives of children. Research has established direct connections between religious socialization and schooling (Schreiber, 2013). Relationship between education and religious priorities and promises for social and academic purposes is very important. Indeed, with schools, families, children and youth are interested in creating and directing their religious identities (Keel, 2016). Children want to be like a parent, at a young age, and do what they do. People need to belong to a specific group outside their childhood years. Due to these two facts, religious society starts at this time (Okon, 1897).

## **2. Research Objectives**

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the role of public and private schooling in promoting religious socialization in secondary school students. The significance of this study lies in the comprehensive analysis of religious socialization, which is a crucial subject requiring extensive examination. Within this study, six factors were utilized to measure religious socialization at the secondary level in schools. These factors encompass the curriculum, teachers, co-curricular activities, school management, class fellows, and parent-teacher interaction. Understanding the role of both public and private schooling in fostering religious socialization among secondary school students is of utmost importance. Additionally, this research sheds light on the evolving social dynamics within religious communities, providing valuable insights into emerging trends.

## **3. Research Method**

The main purpose of this research was to study the role of public and private schooling in promoting religious socialization at secondary school level. The study was quantitative in nature and a survey method was used to collect the data. Target population for the study comprised all public and private secondary schools of district Jhang in Punjab province. According to the school education department, Government of Punjab, total number of students at secondary level of District Jhang is 37677 (23489 male, 14188 female). Multiphase random sampling technique was used to recruit the participants of the study. The sample consisted of 600 secondary school students selected from 16 secondary schools out of

which 8 were public schools while 8 were private schools. After reviewing literature, a questionnaire was developed to assess the religious socialization in the selected sample. The questionnaire consisted of 36 closed ended items divided into six factors including Curriculum, Teacher, Co-curricular activities, School management, Class fellows and parents-teacher intercalation. The instrument was translated into Urdu for the better understanding of students. The students provided answers on a four-point Likert scale. The researcher decoded the Likert scale as under;

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Undecided = 3, Agree = 4,

The translated questionnaire was validated through expert opinions. Five experts serving in 2 public sector universities validated the questionnaire providing their opinion on the relevancy and accuracy of the original questionnaire and its translation. The six factors demonstrated acceptable levels of Cronbach Alpha. The researchers individually visited the selected schools and informed students about the purpose and procedure of data collection. The researchers provide the students help if they face any difficulty in filling the questionnaire. The collected data were recorded in SPSS files and analyzed using descriptive and inferential data analysis techniques. Findings of the study are presented in the following pages.

#### 4. Research Findings

The data presented in Table 1 provides mean scores that illustrate the perceptions of secondary school students regarding religious socialization in the school curriculum. The cumulative mean score for teacher-based religious socialization is 4.17, with a standard deviation of 0.593. Similarly, the cumulative mean score for co-curricular activities-based religious socialization is 3.55, with a standard deviation of 0.826. The cumulative mean score for school environment/management-based religious socialization is 3.94, with a standard deviation of 0.753. Additionally, the cumulative mean score for class fellows-based religious socialization is 3.50, with a standard deviation of 0.789. Lastly, the cumulative mean score for teacher-parent interaction-based religious socialization is 3.97, with a standard deviation of 0.803, as reported by the perceptions of secondary school students.

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation scores to show the students' perceptions about religious socialization at schools**

Sr. No	Sources of religious socialization	Mean	SD
1	Curriculum	4.08	.693
2	Teacher	4.17	.593
3	Co- Curricular activities	3.55	.826
4	School environment / management	3.94	.753
5	Class Fellows	3.50	.789
6	Teacher-Parents Interaction	3.97	.803

**Table 2: Results of independent sample t-test to compare the sources of religious socialization at public and private secondary schools**

Sr. No	Sources	Mean Public	Mean Private	MD	t-value	Sig.
1	Curriculum	4.17	3.88	.293	5.289	.000
2	Teacher	4.32	4.00	.324	6.93	.000
3	Co- Curricular activities	3.66	3.43	.228	3.405	.001
4	School environment / management	4.11	3.74	.371	6.205	.000
5	Class Fellows	3.68	3.30	.381	6.079	.000
6	Teacher-Parents Interaction	4.12	3.81	.307	4.708	.000

**Table 3: Results of independent sample t-test to compare the sources of religious socialization at male and female secondary schools**

Sr. No	Factors	Mean Male	Mean Female	MD	t-value	Sig.
1	Curriculum	4.08	3.93	.147	2.583	.010
2	Teacher	4.23	4.03	.195	4.083	.000
3	Co- Curricular activities	3.55	3.55	.001	.014	.989
4	School environment / management	3.97	3.86	.108	1.723	.086
5	Class Fellows	3.55	3.39	.161	2.483	.013
6	Teacher-Parents Interaction	4.02	3.86	.156	2.255	.025

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the levels of school-based religious socialization between public and private secondary schools. The t-value was found to be significant at the .001 level ( $T = 5.289$ ), indicating significant differences in the opinions of students from public and private schools regarding curriculum-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.293) suggests that, according to student perceptions, public sector secondary schools ( $M=4.17$ ) exhibit higher levels of curriculum-based religious socialization compared to private sector secondary schools ( $M=3.88$ ). Similarly, the t-value was significant at the .001 level ( $T = 6.938$ ) with significant differences observed in the opinions of public and private school students regarding teacher-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.324) indicates that public sector secondary schools ( $M=4.32$ ) demonstrate higher levels of teacher-based religious socialization compared to private sector secondary schools ( $M=4.00$ ). Furthermore, the t-value was significant at the .001 level ( $T = 3.405$ ), indicating significant differences in the opinions of public and private school students regarding co-curricular activities-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.228) suggests that public sector secondary schools ( $M=3.66$ ) have comparatively higher levels of co-curricular activities-based religious socialization than private sector secondary schools ( $M=3.43$ ). The t-value was also found to be significant at the .001 level ( $T = 6.205$ ), indicating significant differences in the opinions of public and private school students regarding school environment/management-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.371) shows that public sector secondary schools ( $M=4.11$ ) exhibit higher levels of school environment/management-based religious socialization compared to private sector secondary schools ( $M=3.74$ ).

Additionally, the t-value was significant at the .001 level ( $T = 6.079$ ), indicating significant differences in the opinions of public and private school students regarding class fellows-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.381) suggests that public sector secondary schools ( $M=3.68$ ) have higher levels of class fellows-based religious socialization compared to private sector secondary schools ( $M=3.30$ ). Lastly, the t-value was significant at the .001 level ( $T = 4.708$ ), indicating significant differences in the opinions of public and private school students regarding teacher-parents interaction-based religious socialization. The mean difference value (.307) explains that public sector secondary schools exhibit higher levels of teacher-parents interaction-based religious socialization compared to private sector secondary schools, according to student perceptions. The results of the Independent T-test comparing religious socialization at male and female secondary schools are summarized in the table 3. The T-value (2.583) for curriculum-based religious socialization is significant at the .001 level, indicating significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. The mean difference (.147) suggests that, according to students' perceptions, male secondary schools demonstrate comparatively higher curriculum-based religious socialization ( $M=4.08$ ) than female secondary schools ( $M=3.93$ ). Similarly, the T-value (4.083) for teacher-based religious socialization is significant at the .001 level, indicating significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. The mean difference (.195) suggests that, according to students' perceptions, male secondary schools demonstrate comparatively higher teacher-based religious socialization ( $M=4.23$ ) than female secondary schools ( $M=4.03$ ).

For Co-curricular activities-based religious socialization, the T-value (.014) is insignificant at the .05 level, indicating no significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. Similarly, for school environment/ management-based religious socialization, the T-value (1.723) is insignificant at the .05 level, indicating no significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. However, the T-value (2.483) for class fellows-based religious socialization is significant at the .001 level, indicating significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. The mean difference (.161) suggests that, according to students' perceptions, male secondary schools demonstrate comparatively higher class fellows-based religious socialization ( $M=3.55$ ) than female secondary schools ( $M=3.39$ ). Finally, the T-value (2.255) for parents-teacher interaction-based religious socialization is significant at the .001 level, indicating significant differences in the opinions of male and female high school students. The mean difference (.156) suggests that, according to students' perceptions, male secondary schools demonstrate comparatively higher parents-teacher interaction-based religious socialization ( $M=4.02$ ) than female secondary schools ( $M=3.86$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The study attempted to develop a clear concept of the role of public and private schooling in promoting religious socialization. The main objectives of the study was to compare the role of public schooling in enhancing religious socialization of secondary school students. The most significant factors in promoting religious socialization at secondary schools stand out in the data are; curriculum, teachers, co-curricular activities, school management, friends and teacher-parents interaction. Findings of the present study show that the opinions of the students' perceptions of certain factors of their school environment and management indicate that schools play a significant role in student religious identity (Mitchell, 2013). The results show that there is a significant difference between the role of public and private sector schooling in promoting religious socialization. The role of public sector schooling is highly significant in enhancing religious socialization than private sector schooling. This study adds regarding schooling effects on religious socialization by demonstrating the influence of different factors of schooling like school management and climate, modes of teachers functions and curriculum on students' religious identity. Previous Research has traditionally highlighted parents as the primary religious socialization whereas only maximum support has been found for additional direct effects of schooling as a factor of promoting religious socialization. In research there is focus only on the parental factor in promoting religious socialization and finally concluded the significant role of family in enhancing religiosity in their children (Kang, 2010). It is found that when parent's attendance at religious places is high, the children attend the religious places more frequently and peers also have significant influence on personal religiosity (M Cornwall, 1988) and the present study works support this. Recent studies indicate that among students, the media influence more than family and church for encounters with a religious system (Lövheim, 2017).

The significance of teachers in fostering religious socialization among students cannot be overstated. This rationale is based on the simple logic that teachers directly impact a child's socio-psychological development. They play a crucial role in shaping a student's religious behavior and are perceived by students as altruistic well-wishers (Chien et al., 2021; Grusec & Hastings, 2014). Students tend to obey their guidance in religious matters and view them as a source of spiritual guidance. A study conducted by Malayev (2014) supports the findings of this research, highlighting the significant contributions of teachers' behavior and school management in promoting religiosity among students, even after considering the influence of parental religiosity. The present study expands upon existing research by examining the role of schooling in promoting religious socialization. It sheds light on the impact of various aspects of teacher functioning and school management on students' religiosity. This study stands out from previous research that typically focuses on only one factor, providing new insights into the multifaceted nature of religious socialization within educational settings. In a school-level study, it has been determined that schools generally do not prioritize the transmission of faith as a traditional educational objective. This sentiment is shared by many parents in European countries, including the Netherlands, who feel that schools do not contribute significantly to their children's religious socialization. However, the present study reveals that schools play a crucial role in the religious socialization of secondary school students, and any shortcomings in this regard may be attributed to management issues.

The study highlights the school as the most influential factor in the religious socialization of secondary school students, as it is within the school environment that students are taught religious values in alignment with their parents' guidance. The positive responses from students regarding their religious socialization at school indicate that the selected secondary schools in the study were deeply rooted in religiosity. The curriculum, teachers, and peers all actively contribute to religious socialization, consciously endeavoring to instill religious values among students. Class fellows also play a significant role in shaping the religious behavior of students. Peer groups exert pressure on their members, encouraging the adoption of common social behaviors, including religiosity. Peer groups particularly influence the religious socialization of students who have limited family attachments or come from non-religious backgrounds. Previous research has found a direct and significant relationship between parental and peer influences and students' religious socialization (Martin, White, & Perlman, 2003). In this study, a novel aspect of promoting religious socialization was explored, which is the teacher-parent interaction. The findings of the research concluded that teacher-parent interaction indeed plays a significant role in this regard. The interaction

between teachers and parents emerged as another influential factor in the religious socialization of students. Despite thorough efforts, the existing literature on the impact of teacher-parent interaction on religious socialization was limited. Therefore, this study provided a fresh perspective on the role of teacher-parent interaction in promoting religious socialization among students. In our study, participants acknowledged the moderate influence of social media on their religiosity. However, it is worth noting that teacher-parent interaction holds tertiary importance in the religious socialization of secondary school students. Through teacher-parent interaction, teachers gain a better understanding of students' religious backgrounds and can effectively contribute to their religious development.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study concluded that there are several factors that contribute to the promotion of religious socialization among secondary school students. These factors, ranked in order of their contribution, include:

**Curriculum:** The curriculum plays a significant role in promoting religious socialization. It includes the inclusion of religious teachings, values, and principles in the educational materials and subjects taught in schools.

**Teacher:** Teachers have a strong influence on religious socialization. They can impart religious knowledge, guide students in understanding religious concepts, and serve as role models for religious behavior.

**Co-curricular activities:** Activities outside the regular curriculum, such as religious clubs, events, and ceremonies, provide opportunities for students to engage in religious practices, interact with like-minded peers, and reinforce their religious identity.

**School environment:** The overall atmosphere and environment of the school, including its policies, practices, and ethos, can contribute to religious socialization. A supportive and inclusive school environment fosters religious values and practices.

**Class fellows:** Peers and classmates also play a role in religious socialization. Interactions with classmates who share similar religious beliefs and practices can reinforce religious identity and provide a sense of belonging.

**Teacher-parent interaction:** Collaboration and communication between teachers and parents contribute to religious socialization. Joint efforts in reinforcing religious values at home and school create a consistent environment for students.

The study found that public schools have a significant role in promoting religious socialization among secondary school students. Factors such as teachers, co-curricular activities, and school management were identified as influential in this regard. The mean scores for public sector schooling were higher compared to private sector schools, indicating a stronger emphasis on religious socialization in public schools. However, it is important to note that there were some variations in students' opinions on the role of public schooling in enhancing religious socialization. Not all students agreed on every statement, suggesting that individual perspectives and experiences may differ. Overall, the study highlights the significance of public schooling in promoting religious socialization among secondary school students, with factors like curriculum, teachers, and co-curricular activities playing a crucial role.

### **6.1. Research Applications**

The present study on the role of public and private schooling in promoting religious socialization among secondary school students makes an important contribution to ongoing research in this area. It provides valuable insights that can be used to formulate and update the curriculum of secondary schools, ensuring that positive religious socialization takes place within the educational setting. One key implication of this study is the importance of creating an environment in the classroom that encourages students to engage in different religious activities and competitions. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating this process, and the study highlights the need for proper training and guidance for teachers to effectively promote religious socialization. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be applied to parents and

teachers training programs. Teachers can use the study as a tool to assess the extent of religious socialization among their students and make adjustments to their teaching methods accordingly. Parents can also benefit from the study by using it as a guide to help their children select appropriate peer groups that align with their religious values. The study also provides clear guidelines on the importance of norms, values, and discipline within schools, which have a direct impact on the religious socialization process of students. This information can be used to create better arrangements and structures within secondary schools to facilitate religious socialization effectively. Additionally, the findings of this study can be used as a basis for future research in the field. Researchers can build upon these findings to explore further aspects of the role of schooling in promoting religious socialization, allowing for a deeper understanding of this complex process. In summary, the present study has practical implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and parental guidance. It provides valuable insights into the role of schooling in promoting religious socialization and opens avenues for future research in this area.

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