

**Research Article**

## **THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICAL OBLIGATION TOWARDS RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG URMIA'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relation between religious beliefs, practical obligation towards religion and educational motivation and development. The present research is a descriptive-correlative study and the population includes 24682 students. Among these students, a number of 380 individuals were selected as the sample through Morgan's table and a cluster sampling method. In this research, Lotfabadi's questionnaire of evaluation of religious beliefs (2003), Khodayari fard's questionnaire of practical obligations towards religion (2010), Herman's questionnaire of educational motivation (1970) and Saatchi et al.'s questionnaire of educational compatibility (2012) were used. For analysis of data, the Pearson's correlation test was performed and the obtained results indicated that having religious beliefs and practical Obligations towards religion do not have any significant impacts on student's educational compatibility and development; but religious beliefs and practical obligation towards religion have a significant impact on students' educational motivation.

**Keywords:** *Religious Beliefs, Educational Motivation, Educational Compatibility, Educational Development*

### **INTRODUCTION**

During the past years, religious have had a significant presence in societies and communities and religious beliefs are considered as fundamental structures for comprehension of social life in current world (Dillon, 2003). Also practical obligation towards religion is the true manifestation of faith and it can be said that without it, faith will not have an actual meaning. It means that if cognition is turned into belief and faith but it does not have any influences on social and personal perspectives and behaviors as well as internal and external behaviors and beliefs, it is not considered as faith. Faith is only seen in practical obligations towards it because no matter how sophisticated the person is, as long as these perspectives and cognitions have not turned into perspective and practice, it cannot penetrate the soul of the person (Shojaei, 2007). Religious beliefs and practical obligations towards religion can have a close relationship with educational compatibility, because if students have religious beliefs they can easily adapt themselves with the environment of school and other students and also compatibility can be regarded as a flow in which the individual puts efforts on adapting him or herself with internal stresses and external obligations (Reed and Victor, 2004). In fact, an individual has compatibility if he or she is able to establish a healthy relation between him or herself and his social environment. On the other hand, social environment also includes family, school location, business environment and likewise. In addition, compatibility has different contexts. One of the most important contexts in terms of compatibility is the concept of educational compatibility. Educational compatibility is related to the amount of individual's compatibility with situation, environment, expectations, demands and social structures in the environment of the institute (Jesus *et al.*, 2006).

Also religious beliefs and practical obligation towards religion can have influences on students' motivation and progression (development). Many researchers have shown that students who have stronger religious beliefs also have more educational development and motivation. One of the factors that can directly affect students' educational development is religious beliefs, self-esteem and students' religious

**Research Article**

intelligence (Biabangard, 2006). Therefore, educational motivation can be considered as tendency to do what you are good at (Jesus-Ali, 2007). Most behaviors that indicate educational motivation are emphasis on performing hard assignments, putting efforts for learning and choice of assignments that require extra efforts. Therefore, educational motivation is a psychological state and is obtained only when the person identifies him or herself as someone who possesses sufficient privileges and autonomy of cognition (Abedi, 2008).

In fact, religion is one of the effective elements on behavior and cognition (Hadian, 2006). Researchers believe that religion helps human to comprehend stressful and painful incidents and causes a desirable happiness in human soul (Swiazky *et al.*, 2005). It should also be pointed out that religion affects individuals' mental processes in a way that some researchers believe that it is through the help of religious beliefs that resistance against emotions and social situations comes true (Diner *et al.*, 2007). Guay and Vallerand (1997) also believe that students' religious beliefs cause them to choose their activity of interest freely and as a result of personal choice and its consequent pleasure, they will improve and develop.

Since religious beliefs and practical obligations towards religion can affect students' educational compatibility and educational development, identification of these elements is important and necessary. Therefore, the present research seeks a scientific answer to the question that is having religious beliefs able to determine students' educational compatibility, educational motivation and educational development? Or having religious beliefs in addition to having practical obligations towards religion is more capable to determine changes in educational compatibility, educational motivation and educational development of students?

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Methods**

The present research is a descriptive-correlative study. The population includes 24682 students among whom a number of 380 individuals were selected as the sample through Morgan's table and a cluster sampling method. In this research the questionnaires of evaluation of religious beliefs (Lotfabadi, 2003), practical obligation towards religion (Khodayarifrad, 2010), educational motivation (Hemans, 1970) and educational compatibility (Saatchi *et al.*, 2012) were used. These questionnaires are standard and their reliability and validities have been approved in several various researches. Therefore, their reliability and validities were not investigated in this research. For analysis of data, the Pearson's correlation method was used.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

*Description of Research Variables*

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students' score in studied variables**

<b>Elongatio n</b>	<b>Skewednes s</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Minimu m</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Variables</b>
-0/40	0/38	69	14	11/60	11/60	Religious Beliefs
0/69	1/01	70	14	9/22	25/08	practical obligation towards religion
1/11	0/94	68	14	8/88	28/77	educational motivation
-0/34	-0/08	35	23	2/14	28/73	educational compatibility
0/94	-1/08	20	10	3/03	16/13	educational development

**Research Article**

As you can see in table 1, the average score for social beliefs is 11.60, the average score for practical obligations towards religion is 25.08, the average score for educational compatibility is 28.73 and the average score for educational development is 16.13. Also investigation of elongation and skewedness of students' scores regarding the studied variables indicates that the distribution of scores regarding the studied variables is normal.

**Table 2: Difference between students in terms of studied variables based on gender**

Sig	t	Male M(S)	Female M(S)	Variables
0/013	2/51	34/08(12/84)	37/05(10/21)	Religious beliefs
0/316	-1/00	25/59(10/39)	24/63(8/052)	Practical obligation towards religion
0/113	-1/59	29/54(9/86)	28/09(7/86)	Educational motivation
0/035	-2/11	28/98(2/14)	28/51(2/12)	Educational compatibility
0/011	2/56	15/71(2/42)	16/50(3/45)	Educational development

Table 2 indicates that female students have higher scores in terms of religious beliefs and educational development compared to male students and also male students' educational compatibility scores are higher than female students' scores. Both genders have acquired similar scores in terms of practical obligations towards religion and educational motivation.

**Analysis of Results**

**Table 3: Correlation coefficient between religious beliefs and educational compatibility**

significance	number	Religious beliefs	Correlation coefficient
0/06	379	0/10	Educational compatibility
0/001	379	0/19	Educational motivation
0/38	241	0/06	Educational development
0/93	379	0/005	Educational compatibility
0/001	378	0/50	Educational motivation
0/55	379	0/03	Educational development

As you can see in table 3, there are no significant relations among students' religious beliefs and educational compatibility. But there exists a significant relation between religious beliefs and educational motivation. In other words, as students' religious beliefs increase, their educational motivation is improved. There were also no significant relations discovered between educational development and religious beliefs. In other words, increase or decrease of students' religious beliefs has no significant effects on students' educational development. There were also no significant relations discovered between and among practical obligation towards religion and educational compatibility. In other words, increase or decrease in practical obligations towards religion has no significant effects on students' educational compatibility. But there was a significant relation discovered between practical obligations towards religion and students' educational motivation. In other words, as students' practical obligations towards religion are increased, their educational motivation is improved. There were no significant relations discovered between practical obligation towards religion and educational development.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Findings of the first research hypothesis indicated that there are no significant relations among student's educational compatibility and religious beliefs. In other words, increase or decrease of students' religious beliefs has no significant effects on their educational compatibility. The findings of this research are not compatible with findings of any previous research. Results of the research conducted by Zichovski (2007) indicated that there existed a significant relation between religious beliefs and educational compatibility and it is considered as the most important anticipator of educational compatibility. Students, who had

### **Research Article**

more confidence in their educational capability, have gained higher scores and experience a reduced level of stress and therefore, have higher educational compatibility. Kim and Sistchi (2002) and Khodapanhi *et al.*, (2006) have also found the same results. Also the finding of Olano *et al.* (2000) indicated that a weak belief in religion leads to lack of compatibility at school and causes internal and external behavioral issues (Quoted from Zahmatkeshan, 2006).

Therefore it can be inferred that any type of change in the environment can cause mental stresses. People cope with these stresses by changing their cultures or keeping their current culture and enduring. When the change is significant and dominates people's disciplinary mechanisms and social supports, it may cause a lot of stress. In very educational environment, expectations such as on time attendance, performance of designated assignments, keeping quiet and etc. are different disciplinary samples which cause stresses for the person and is significantly different from the home life which he or she had been used to. The person might easily cope with the situation or he or she might even show hatred towards it. In such a situation, the person puts less time on thinking about his or her beliefs. It seems that there have been no actions taken by authorities in this context for providing students with awareness regarding the manner of implementing religious lessons for reduction of educational stresses.

The findings of the second research hypothesis indicated that there exists a significant, positive and meaningful relation between students' religious beliefs and educational motivation. In other words, as students' religious beliefs are higher, they also have better educational motivation. The findings of this research are compatible with the findings of previous researches. Macabre and Davis (2006) have also indicated in their research that religious beliefs lead to improved educational motivation and a positive perspective towards life and fade of stressful elements and on the other hand declination of anxiety and Najjar (2006) has also concluded in his research that students who have religious beliefs have higher educational motivation.

The finding of the third research hypothesis indicated that there are no significant relations among religious beliefs and students' educational development. In other words, decrease or increase of religious beliefs has no significant impacts on students' educational development. The findings of this research are compatible with the findings of the research conducted by Aghvami *et al.*, (2012) which indicated that there were no relations between students' scores and their religious beliefs.

These findings indicate that only presence of religious beliefs cannot be related to educational development because presence of other variables such as studying, existence of emotional conditions and family's economic and social status and several other elements are related to educational development.

The finding of fourth research hypothesis indicated that there are no significant and meaningful relations among practical obligation towards religion and students' educational compatibility. In other words increase or decrease of students' practical obligations towards religion has no significant effect on their educational compatibility. Findings of this research are compatible with the findings of the research conducted by Schlodermann *et al.*, (2001) regarding 443 male and female university students which indicated that there are no significant relations among religious beliefs and educational compatibility among male and female students; but these findings are in contrast with the findings of Olano *et al.*, (2007); Molton *et al.*, (1991) and Zajako *et al.*, (2005). These findings indicate that practical obligation towards religion is not the only effective element in students' compatibility therefore, it is necessary to investigate other effective elements in this context such as families, professors, managers of the society and etc. also providing a suitable and sound educational environment and a disciplined structure can play a significant role in reduction of students' incompatibility.

The finding of the test of fifth research hypothesis indicated that there exists a significant, positive and meaningful relation between practical obligation towards religion and students' educational motivation. In other words, as students' practical obligations towards religion are increased, their educational motivation is improved. The findings of this research are compatible with the following findings (Hackney and Sanders, 2003).

The finding of the test of sixth research hypothesis indicated that there were no significant relations discovered between practical obligation towards religion and educational development. It can be

### Research Article

concluded that merely having religious beliefs is only effective in improvement of students' educational motivation and plays no role in compatibility and educational development. But practical obligation towards religion is effective in improvement of educational compatibility, educational motivation and educational development. Therefore, for promotion of these three variables among students, we are required to propagate practical obligations towards religion among them in addition to religious beliefs.

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**Research Article**

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