

Analyzing Minority Empowerment: Statistical Modeling of the Plight of Minorities in Peshawar Pakistan

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Abstract: *This research investigates challenges faced by minority groups in Peshawar District, comparing living conditions and quality of life between Muslims and non-Muslims. It explores minorities' perceptions regarding struggles in education and constitutional matters. Utilizing a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 400 citizens, this study employs Exploratory Factor Analysis MG-SEM to delve into individual perceptions. The results reveal a consistent pattern, with Muslims generally content and minorities expressing dissatisfaction, emphasizing the need for a more balanced environment. The study advocates for proactive government intervention, including education initiatives and safety laws, to bridge the divide and promote understanding. The findings aim to serve as a foundation for advocacy, raising awareness about minority rights, and contributing to efforts for equal rights in Peshawar District. Through statistical modeling and local context understanding, this research seeks to inspire positive change and foster a more equitable and harmonious future for all residents.*

Keywords: Violence Against Minorities; Faith-Based Discrimination; Social Exclusion; Marginalization; Stigmatization; Gender-Based Discrimination

Introduction

Religion has had a wide-ranging impact on how people behave, serving both as a source of moral guidance and as a catalyst for conflict and violence. Despite instances where religion has been misused to justify bigotry and aggression, it has also provided solace, empathy, and ethical principles that have contributed positively to humanity. As a pivotal aspect of identity, religion often intersects with socioeconomic status, political participation, and access to resources, thereby shaping the experiences of individuals and communities (1). Within the historical context of Pakistan, religious minorities have long grappled with challenges such as discrimination, marginalization, and limited political representation, which have posed significant obstacles to their empowerment and overall well-being (2).

Turning the focus to Pakistan's historical landscape, the discussion centers on the rich cultural mosaic of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) region. This region serves as a historical melting pot where communities like Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, and Baha'is have not only coexisted for centuries but have played pivotal roles in shaping the economic and cultural trajectory of the area (3). Pakistan was envisioned as a progressive and tolerant society, with religious freedom at its core, by its founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah. However, this vision of a secular Pakistan was not fully realized. Subsequent leaders shifted the country's trajectory towards becoming an Islamic state, contrary to Jinnah's vision.

Pakistan's demographic landscape has changed significantly despite its founding principles. At the time of partition in 1947, nearly a quarter of Pakistan's population consisted of non-Muslims. Today, this proportion has dwindled to only about 3%, reflecting a decline in religious diversity within the country.

The discussion above underscores the challenges faced by religious minorities, suggesting that they encounter hostility and adversity within their living environments. This notion highlights the importance of conducting a systematic review of existing literature on the issues faced by religious minorities to gain a comprehensive understanding of their circumstances. Numerous studies have documented the struggles and discrimination experienced by religious minority communities in various contexts. Latif et al. (4) examine the socio-economic challenges faced by religious minorities in Pakistan, highlighting issues such as limited access to education, employment discrimination, and social exclusion in Political affairs. Similarly, studies by Athar (5) explore the impact of religion. discrimination on the well-being and quality of life of minority groups in different regions. These studies provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the challenges confronting religious minorities and emphasize the importance of addressing these issues through evidence-based policymaking and advocacy efforts.

Despite constitutional guarantees, the narrative exposes systemic discrimination and societal biases impacting minorities in various domains, including housing, employment, political representation, and education. Instances of religious violence and persecution, such as forced conversions and attacks on places of worship, emerge as critical concerns that demand scrutiny. This article reviews the existing literature on the Plight of Minorities in District Peshawar. The knowledge generated from this review assists educators, policymakers, and researchers in developing evidence-based strategies toward a future where Peshawar truly becomes a place of equality, respect, and opportunity for all. Furthermore, studying the experiences of minorities in Peshawar also fosters a sense of empathy and understanding among a wider audience, encouraging constructive dialogue and positive change within the broader community, which is a small but meaningful step toward a more equitable and harmonious society where all individuals, regardless of their background, can thrive and contribute to the collective progress of our city and country.

Case Studies

The fight for equality and the plight of minorities have taken on greater significance in recent years across many regions in the literature. The literature has extensively addressed the issue of minorities. Previous studies have investigated factors influencing the plight of minorities. This section thoroughly reviews pertinent research, emphasizing noteworthy findings and contributions in this domain.

Citizenship Rights and Satisfaction

The murders of Salmaan Taseer and Shahbaz Bhatti shocked Pakistan and the world. The widespread support for their killers highlighted the alarming state of religious minorities, especially Christians, in Pakistan (6). A cross-sectional study on strict minorities in Pakistan revealed their low satisfaction with citizenship privileges, emphasizing concerns about government policies and the attitudes of the Muslim majority. The findings underscore challenges in areas like freedom of expression and association with the Muslim community (7).

Media Representation

Lindsey and Butt (8) highlighted minorities' efforts to increase their media influence. A recent review on Muslims- the majority of Pakistan's attitudes toward religious minorities supported existing literature on unfavorable perceptions but didn't explore biases based on religion or culture. This research focused on how Pakistan's English-language press covered minority groups, analyzing 127 news items from top newspapers. Findings revealed generally positive coverage for most minorities,

except Ahmadis. Christians received more attention than other groups, while Buddhists, Parsis, and Jains were the least covered (9).

Government Policies and Attitudes

Pakistan, an Islamic Republic, guarantees religious freedom to minorities in its constitution, emphasizing Islam's principles. However, some clerics are imposing restrictions on religious diversity, raising concerns about the treatment of religious minorities (10). The successive constitutions of Pakistan safeguard fundamental rights and establish judicial review. This article highlights the inconsistent rulings of the Pakistani judiciary on the religious minority, Ahmadis, exploring their struggle for the free exercise of their faith (11).

Education and Discrimination

The Christian minority in Pakistan faces daily struggles, socioeconomic challenges, and political marginalization. Despite historical coexistence, they perceive denial of fundamental rights and contend with humiliation, prompting research into the true nature of their sociopolitical and economic problems (12). Recent history in Pakistan underscores the importance of minority rights. Linked to the global village concept, a study investigates educational barriers for religious minority students, aiming to identify and address discrimination issues. The research involves 320 teachers selected through purposive sampling to explore the challenges faced by students from religious minorities (13).

Freedom of Religion and Legal Rights

The right to freedom of religion or belief is protected by international human rights instruments, which encompass various entitlements, such as the right to practice and manifest one's beliefs individually or collectively. States are obliged under international law to refrain from discriminating against individuals or groups based on their beliefs. Despite partial codification in the 1973 Constitution, the rights of religious minorities remain inadequately protected with Islam often encroaching upon their lives. Their research identifies concerns in the public school system, including a lack of understanding of religious diversity, encouragement of prejudice, and the glorification of war against non-Muslims (15).

Aim and Objectives

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of discrimination among both Muslims and minority populations and assess how these perceptions affect their quality of life. This objective aims to understand the impact of discrimination on various aspects of well-being and identify potential avenues for addressing disparities.

The objectives of our study are as follows:

- To investigate various aspects of freedom in religious practices and assess their impact on overall satisfaction among individuals
- To assess and compare the Quality-of-Life Index between individuals belonging to the Muslim community and minority groups
- Based on the findings, develop evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at improving the quality of life for both Muslims and minority populations

Method

Sampling Design

In this research study, a two-phase stratified sampling design was employed to gather data on minority empowerment and the challenges faced by minorities. The design involves the stratification of the sample based on religious affiliation, i.e., distinguishing between Muslims and non-Muslims. Stratification ensures that each subgroup is well-represented in the final sample and allows for more accurate estimations and comparisons between the two groups.

Phase 1: Dimensions of Discrimination

During the first phase, data was collected from both strata across five dimensions, encompassing “Freedom in religious practices”, “Constitutional rights”, “Access to education”, “Attitude of society”, and “Media coverage”. A convenience sampling approach was employed within both strata (Muslims and non-Muslims). Due to practical constraints and limitations, such as time, resources, and accessibility to the target population, convenience sampling was deemed the most feasible approach. In the Muslim stratum, participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, often through contacts within religious institutions or community organizations. Similarly, in the non-Muslim stratum, individuals were conveniently sampled from accessible locations or networks within the community.

Phase 2: Quality of Life Index

In the second phase of the study, a sub-sample was carefully chosen from both the Muslim and non-Muslim strata. This sub-sample was selected with the specific purpose of estimating their Quality-of-Life Index (QoLI). The QoLI is a composite measure that typically considers various factors related to well-being and satisfaction. By focusing on a subset from each stratum, the researchers aimed to gain insights into the quality of life experienced by individuals in both the Muslim and non-Muslim groups, allowing for understanding and comparison of their respective living conditions.

Sample Size

Estimating an appropriate sample size is a critical aspect of research design, ensuring that the study has sufficient statistical power to detect meaningful effects. For our investigation into the dimensions influencing satisfaction, we employ the Taro Yamane formula, a commonly utilized method for determining the ideal sample size in survey research. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (1)$$

Here, n represents the desired sample size, N denotes the population size, and e symbolizes the desired level of precision. We have employed an equal allocation strategy, ensuring that an equitable number of participants is drawn from each stratum. This approach involves allocating the sampling effort evenly between the two strata, maintaining a balanced representation of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Measurement Model

In this study, a measurement model was utilized to elucidate the relationships between latent constructs and their associated observable indicators. A measurement model serves as a framework for understanding how observable variables or indicators are related to underlying, unobservable constructs. In the context of this research, latent constructs such as “Freedom in religious practices,” “Constitutional rights,” “Access to education,” “Attitude of society,” and “Media coverage” were identified as key dimensions of interest. Observable indicators were carefully selected to represent these latent constructs. Through the measurement model, the study sought to explore the extent to which the chosen indicators reflect the underlying constructs they are intended to measure. By examining the relationships between latent constructs and their observable indicators, the measurement model provides a structured approach to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments used in the study. Figure 1 below represents an overview of indexing the latent constructs from observable variables using a measurement model.

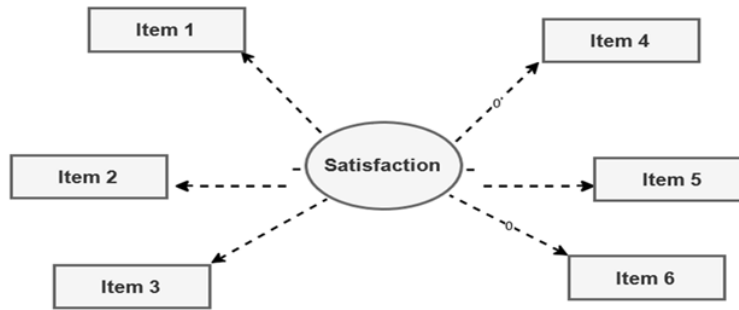


Figure 1: A comprehensive view of the measurement model

Multigroup Structural Equation Modeling

The study employed Multigroup Structural Equation Modeling (MG-SEM) as a sophisticated analytical approach to investigate the dynamics of empowerment, particularly focusing on the influence of religion. MG-SEM allowed us to construct separate structural equation models for each religious group, facilitating a meticulous exploration of the distinct relationships between latent constructs and their observable indicators. The primary advantage of MG-SEM lies in its ability to simultaneously estimate model parameters for different groups while enabling direct comparisons between them. This approach not only considers the unique characteristics of each religious subgroup but also permits the identification of any significant variations in the relationships among latent constructs based on religious affiliation. By constraining specific model parameters across groups, we were able to assess the extent to which empowerment dimensions differed between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Furthermore, satisfaction emerges as the dependent variable, intricately linked to and influenced by underlying five key dimensions. These dimensions collectively serve as the building blocks that shape and define the overall satisfaction experienced by individuals within the context of our study. Our investigation delves into the intricate relationships and dynamics among these dimensions, seeking to uncover the interplay that underlies the satisfaction of individuals. Through a thorough analysis, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these dimensions collectively impact and shape the satisfaction levels of participants in our study.

Furthermore, MG-SEM enabled us to rigorously test for measurement invariance, ensuring that the chosen latent constructs and their associated indicators held consistent meanings and relationships across both religious groups. This comprehensive assessment contributes to the validity and reliability of our findings, enhancing the robustness of our interpretations. Figure 2 below demonstrates a comprehensive overview of our MG-SEM model.

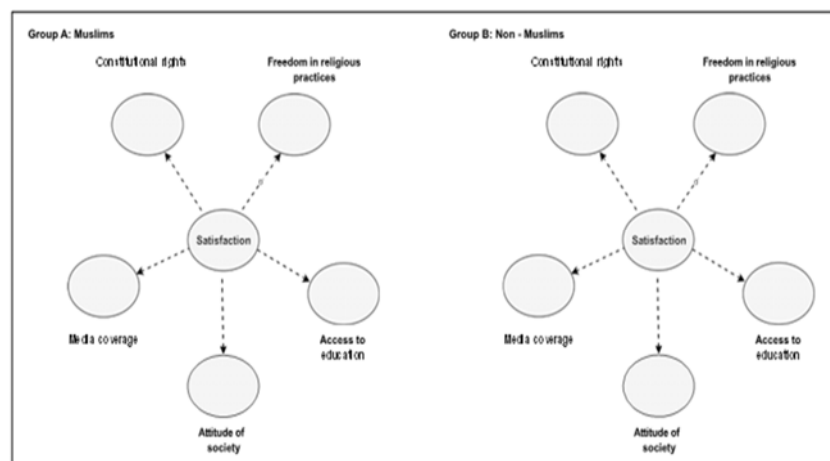


Figure 2: A comprehensive view of the Multigroup Structural Equation Model

Data Validity

Ensuring the validity of data is a critical aspect of any research study, as it guarantees that the measurement instrument used accurately captures the intended constructs. In our research, we meticulously evaluated the reliability and validity of our instrument, employing the widely recognized measure of internal consistency known as Cronbach’s alpha. The obtained Cronbach’s alpha value exceeded 0.8, signaling a high level of reliability in our instrument. This suggests that the individual items within each construct are strongly correlated and consistently measure the intended aspects of our study. Additionally, the internal consistency for each of the five dimensions meets the acceptable threshold, with Cronbach’s alphas for all factors surpassing 0.7. This robust internal consistency underscores the reliability of our scale and the uniformity of measurement within each distinct factor (George and Mallery, 2016).

Results

Fit Indices for Model Diagnostics

Table 1 presents a range of fit indices aimed at assessing the model’s overall goodness of fit. The χ^2 statistic yields a significant result with a p-value of 0.000. However, this significance may be attributed to the large sample size. The χ^2 /d.f ratio, a measure of relative fit, is 1.949. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.0.95, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.93, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.771. These indices further contribute to the comprehensive assessment of the model’s fit. The close approximation of CFI and TLI to 1 indicates a favorable fit of the model to the data. These fit indices assess how well the hypothesized model compares to an” independence” model. A value close to 1 suggests that the proposed model is a good representation of the observed data. Additionally, the NFI, though slightly lower than CFI and TLI, falls within an acceptable range. Collectively, these fit indices reinforce the notion that, despite statistically significant differences in observed and expected co-variances, the model maintains a reasonably good fit for the data. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value is close to zero. This further supports the overall model fit, as RMSEA values near zero indicate a good fit of the model to the observed data

Table 1: Chi-Square goodness of fit Indices for SEM model

Fit Statistic	Statistic Value	Recommended value
χ^2	586.64	0.02
d.f	301	-
χ^2 /d.f	1.949	0.01
NFI	0.771	1.0
CFI	0.95	1.0
TLI	0.93	1.0
RMSEA	0.049	Close to 0

Measurement Model

Table 2 demonstrates the factor loadings and reliability test values for various items, each contributing to specific constructs in the structural equation model (SEM). Starting with Construct A, which examines” Freedom in Religious Practices,” items A1 to A6 showcase generally strong factor loadings (ranging from 0.664 to 0.823).

This implies a robust relationship between these items and the underlying construct. However, it’s noteworthy that the overall internal consistency, as indicated by the reliability test value (0.727), is moderate. Moving on to Construct B, focusing on” Constitutional Rights,” items B1 to B5 exhibit factor loadings ranging from 0.709 to 0.812. This suggests a favorable relationship with the latent construct.

The reliability test value (0.699) indicates a moderate level of internal consistency. Construct C, exploring "Access to Education", demonstrates factor loadings between 0.540 and 0.796 for items C1 to C5, reflecting a robust relationship with the latent factor. The high overall reliability test value (0.881) indicates strong internal consistency. However, it is important to note the negative loading on item C3 (-0.542), indicating a potential inverse relationship with the latent construct. For Construct D, which assesses the role of "Media Coverage" in minority issues, items D1 to D4 display factor loading from 0.560 to 0.765. The reliability test value is 0.553, suggesting a moderate level of internal consistency. Finally, Construct E, examining societal attitudes towards minorities, displays factor loading ranging from 0.510 to 0.865. The reliability test value (0.649) suggests a moderate level of internal consistency.

Table 2: Various indices for goodness of fit

Factor	Items	Loading
Freedom in religious practices	A ₁ : You encounter security threats accessing worship places	0.699
	A ₂ : You have proper transportation to your worship places	0.823
	A ₃ : As a citizen, minorities went through persecution	0.664
	A ₄ : You face verbal abuse near worship places	0.715
	A ₅ : You witness religious degradation of in the society	0.724
	A ₆ : Society tolerate open practice and belief sharing	0.600
Reliability	0.727	
Constitutional Rights	B ₁ : Minorities are adequately represented in Parliament	0.744
	B ₂ : There is representation of women from minorities in government	0.744
	B ₃ : You are suffering from a lack of proper performance of the law	0.812
	B ₄ : You are aware of your rights in the constitution	0.709
	B ₅ : The constitution is safeguarding your rights	0.709
Reliability	0.699	
Access to Education	C ₁ : Prestigious institutions guarantee accommodating minority students	0.796
	C ₂ : The course materials include an elective component on religious studies	0.540
	C ₃ : The current ratio of reserved seats is sufficient for minorities	-0.542
	C ₄ : Minority students are encountering inequality within their classrooms	0.727
	C ₅ : Not enough support in education and jobs makes it hard for minorities	0.783
Reliability	0.881	
Media Coverage	D ₁ : Religious minorities receive sufficient coverage in the press	0.765
	D ₂ : Media highlights non-Muslims converting to Islam positively	0.679
	D ₃ : Media report on events and matters concerning minority populations	0.560
	D ₄ : Some sanitation job ads exclude Muslims, promoting discrimination	0.676
Reliability	0.553	
Attitude of Society	E ₁ : Your neighborhood treats you in a good manner	0.692
	E ₂ : To make friends in society is easy for you	0.674
	E ₃ : Harsh treatment led to thoughts of self-harm in your experience	0.865
	E ₄ : Society as a whole tolerates the existence of minorities	0.510
	E ₅ : While you are in public places with your family you feel comfortable	0.708
	E ₅ : Minorities receive acknowledgment for their services to society	0.628
Reliability	0.649	

Path Coefficients

Table 3 below demonstrates the standardized coefficients of MG-SEM with Satisfaction as the dependent variable and five dimensions (Freedom in Religious Practices, Constitutional Rights, Access to Education, Attitude of Attitude, Media Coverage) as explanatory variables, considering Muslims and non-Muslims as two groups. All of the standardized coefficients are significant, indicating a positive relationship between the satisfaction level and their corresponding dimension.

Table 3: Standardized Path Coefficients of MG-SEM Model

Dimension	Path Coefficient	P-value
Freedom in Religious Practices	0.71	0.001
Constitutional Rights	0.50	0.004
Access to Education	0.60	0.002
Attitude of Society	0.55	0.002
Media Coverage	0.43	0.007

Table 4 provides insights into the comparison group-specific path coefficients between different dimensions and Satisfaction for Muslims and Non-Muslims. The path coefficient of 0.71 indicates a stronger relationship between "Freedom in Religious Practices" and the outcome variable "satisfaction." However, the p-value of 0.003 indicates that there is a significant difference in the said coefficient for Muslims and non-Muslims. The path coefficient comparison of "Constitutional Rights" between Muslims (0.57) and non-Muslims (0.49) indicates a slightly stronger relationship for Muslims, but the observed difference is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.121. The path coefficient for Muslims (0.69) is higher than that of non-Muslims (0.52), indicating a stronger relationship between "Access to Education" and the Satisfaction level. The t-value of 2.06 with a corresponding p-value of 0.012 suggests that the difference in path coefficients between Muslims and Non-Muslims is statistically significant. Similarly, the path coefficient of "Attitude of Society" for Muslims (0.64) is substantially higher than that of Non-Muslims (0.40). The t-value of 3.18 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 suggests that the difference in path coefficients between Muslims and Non-Muslims is statistically significant. Furthermore, the path coefficient of "Media Coverage" for Muslims (0.50) is higher than that of non-Muslims (0.33). The t-value of 2.79 with a corresponding p-value of 0.015 suggests that the difference in path coefficients between Muslims and Non-Muslims is statistically significant.

Table 4: Group-Specific Path Coefficients of MG-SEM Model

Dimension	Muslims	Non-Muslims	t	p-value
	Path Coefficient	Path Coefficient		
Freedom in Religious Practices	0.79	0.55	2.69	0.003
Constitutional Rights	0.57	0.49	1.61	0.121
Access to Education	0.69	0.52	2.06	0.012
Attitude of Society	0.64	0.40	3.18	0.000
Media Coverage	0.50	0.33	2.79	0.015

Phase 2: Quality Of Life

In the second phase of our study, we embark on estimating the QoLI by employing a targeted sub-sample selection within each stratum. This phase involves a meticulous process of gathering data from a subset of participants previously identified in the initial sampling. By focusing on this specific sub-sample, we aim to delve deeper into the complexities of quality-of-life perceptions among both Muslims and minorities. This approach allows for a more detailed analysis, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the overall quality of life within each demographic group. The second phase plays a pivotal role in refining our examination of QoLI, ensuring a representative exploration of the diverse experiences within the studied population. Table 5 below demonstrates the

descriptive statistics of QoLI by religious affiliation. The descriptive statistics indicate that, on average, Muslims in Peshawar tend to perceive a higher quality of life compared to minority populations. The higher mean, median, and less variability in QoLI scores among Muslims suggest a more consistent and comparatively favorable perception of QoLI within this religious demographic.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Quality-of-Life Index (QoLI) by Religious Affiliation

Statistics	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Total Sample		
Mean (SD)	0.780 (0.045)	0.720 (0.060)
Median	0.785	0.725
Min	0.720	0.650
Max	0.830	0.790

To delve deeper into the understanding of this disparity we examine the individual indicators comprising the QoLI. These insights are essential for shaping policies and initiatives designed to promote greater equity across diverse societal domains for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Figure 3 below demonstrates a comparison of these indicators. Sub-plot A reveals a significant discrepancy, with Muslims earning over 52,000 per month, while minorities find themselves with a comparatively lower income of 46,000. This suggests a disparity in economic access and potential avenues for financial growth between the two groups. Similarly, as indicated by subplot B, the security indicator demonstrates a slight advantage for Muslims compared to non-Muslims. Delving into educational prospects, as indicated by subplot C, the data reveals that the educational landscape seems to favor Muslims, with no substantial differences. Both groups exhibit almost similar access to education. Furthermore, a slight difference in the ratings of housing quality was observed between Muslims and non-Muslims. This finding suggests a distinction in the perception of housing conditions between the two groups. Turning attention to healthcare, sub-Figures E indicate a substantial divide in the ratings between Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslims appear to have a more pronounced share of healthcare resources, suggesting disparities in healthcare access. This could have profound implications for the well-being and QoLI for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

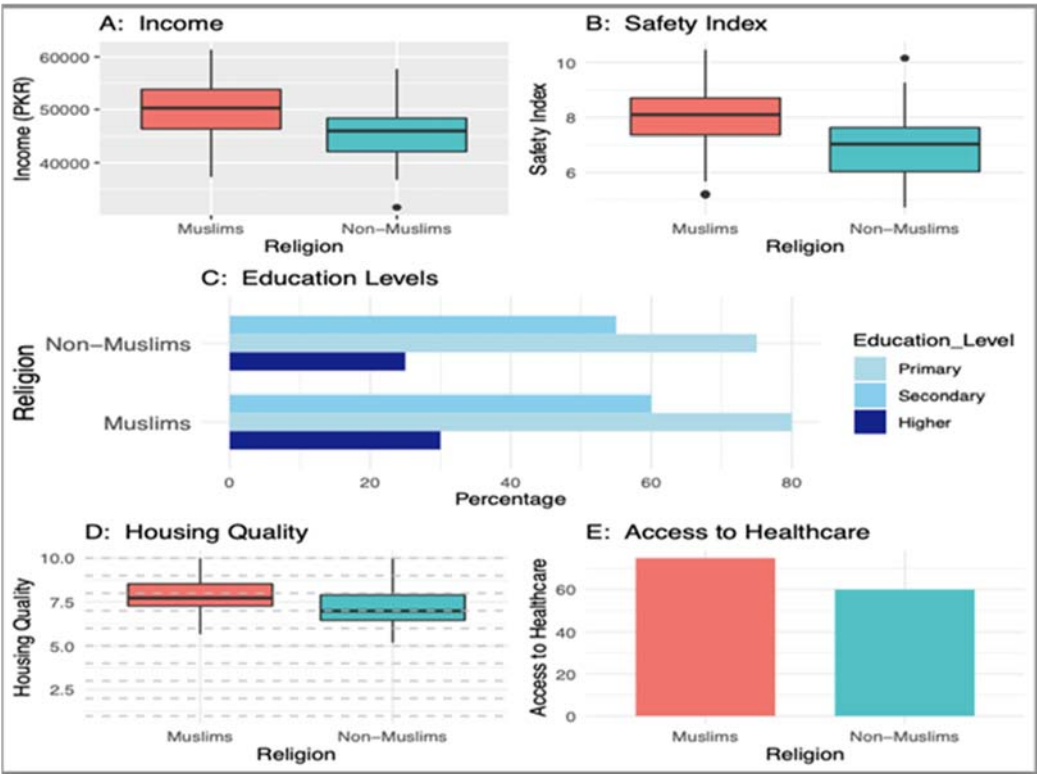


Figure 3: Quality of Life Domains for Muslims and Minorities in Peshawar

Discussion

The core objective of this study was to delve into the disparities in satisfaction levels and the Quality-of-Life Index (QoLI) experienced by both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in Peshawar, Pakistan. Employing quantitative analysis, the research encompassed an exploration of multiple dimensions, such as economic status, access to education and healthcare, religious freedom, satisfaction levels, and QoLI.

The findings of the study shed light on several noteworthy disparities between Muslims and non-Muslim minorities. Notably, non-Muslim minorities reported encountering challenges in freely practicing their faith, which could potentially contribute to feelings of frustration, alienation, and dissatisfaction with their lives. This underscores the significance of protecting religious freedoms and fostering an environment of tolerance and inclusivity within society. The observed limitations may stem from various factors such as discriminatory policies, social stigma, or lack of access to religious institutions. Religious minorities often face significant challenges in practicing their faith freely due to institutionalized discrimination and societal biases (24; 25). Therefore, the observed lower satisfaction levels among minorities in our study may be attributed, at least in part, to the limited freedom they experience in practicing their religion. Addressing these barriers to religious freedom is essential for promoting greater satisfaction and well-being among minority populations.

The association between access to education and the satisfaction levels of individuals is a well-documented phenomenon. Numerous studies highlight the pivotal role of education in shaping overall life satisfaction and well-being. In the specific context of Pakistan, limited access to education for minority groups is a concerning factor that can significantly impact their satisfaction levels. Restricted access to quality education among minority populations in Pakistan can contribute to disparities in various life domains, including satisfaction and well-being. Barriers such as lack of educational infrastructure, discriminatory policies, and socioeconomic challenges create obstacles for minorities seeking education (26). Furthermore, the relationship between educational opportunities and life satisfaction in the Pakistani context. They underscore the importance of addressing educational inequalities to enhance the overall satisfaction and quality of life for minority communities. Research by Verkuyten (2008) emphasizes the significant influence of societal attitudes on the life satisfaction of minority groups. The study highlights, that negative societal attitudes, such as discrimination and prejudice, contribute to lower levels of well-being and satisfaction among minorities. It underscores the importance of fostering positive attitudes within society to enhance the overall satisfaction of minority populations (27). Additionally, the work by Broman (1997) delves into the psychological mechanisms through which societal attitudes affect individual satisfaction. The study suggests that a positive societal attitude towards minorities can create an inclusive environment, fostering a sense of belonging and positively influencing the life satisfaction of minority individuals (28). Research by Sink and Mastro (2017) delves into the impact of media representation on the life satisfaction of minority populations. The study suggests that positive and accurate media coverage contributes to a more favorable social environment, fostering a sense of inclusion and positively affecting the overall well-being and satisfaction of minorities. Conversely, negative or stereotypical media portrayals can lead to feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, studies like Anna (2023) highlight the role of media in shaping public attitudes towards minorities and the subsequent effects on individual satisfaction. Media coverage that promotes diversity and inclusivity and challenges stereotypes can contribute to a more positive societal attitude, positively influencing the life satisfaction of minorities (30).

Several studies have examined various factors contributing to differences in QoLI between Muslim and non-Muslim populations in Pakistan. One significant factor is the socio-economic status of these communities. Chapra (31) found that Muslims, who constitute the majority population in Pakistan, often have better access to economic opportunities, education, and healthcare compared to non-Muslim

minorities. This disparity in socio-economic status can significantly impact QoLI, as individuals with higher incomes and better access to services tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction and well-being (32). Furthermore, cultural and societal norms may also play a role in shaping the QoLI of Muslims and non-Muslims in Pakistan. Elmasry (33) suggests that religious beliefs and practices can influence various aspects of daily life, including social relationships, family dynamics, and community engagement. For Muslims, adherence to Islamic principles and values may provide a sense of purpose, community support, and spiritual fulfillment, which are positively associated with QoLI (34). Moreover, governmental policies and institutional practices may inadvertently favor Muslims over non-Muslims in Pakistan, leading to disparities in access to resources and opportunities. Ali (35) highlights the challenges faced by non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan, including discrimination, marginalization, and limited representation in decision-making processes. These systemic inequalities can negatively impact the QoLI of non-Muslims and contribute to the perception of religious-based disparities in well-being.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of satisfaction levels and QoLI among Muslims and non-Muslim minorities in Peshawar, Pakistan. Through quantitative analysis, we uncovered several noteworthy disparities and challenges faced by minority communities, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address these issues effectively.

Moreover, our study highlighted variations in access to essential services, such as education and healthcare, between the two groups. While both Muslims and non-Muslim minorities exhibit similar levels of educational attainment, discrepancies in healthcare access were apparent, with Muslims generally enjoying better access to healthcare resources. This underscores the importance of equitable service provision and the need to address barriers that impede access for minority communities. Furthermore, our research delved into the realm of religious freedom and its implications for satisfaction levels and QoLI. Non-Muslim minorities reported encountering challenges in freely practicing their faith, which could contribute to feelings of disenfranchisement and dissatisfaction. Protecting religious freedoms and fostering an environment of tolerance and inclusivity within society are essential steps in addressing these issues.

In synthesizing these insights, it becomes evident that achieving a more equitable and inclusive society requires addressing systemic barriers to religious freedom, educational opportunities, and societal attitudes. Policymakers, community leaders, and media influencers play crucial roles in fostering an environment that values diversity, promotes inclusivity, and challenges stereotypes. By addressing these factors, we can work towards enhancing the overall Quality of Life Index for all individuals, regardless of religious affiliation or minority status in Pakistan.

Limitation and Future Work

While our study provides valuable insights into the plight of minorities in District Peshawar, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the generalizability and scope of our findings.

- **Data Collection Methods:** Our study relied on specific data collection methods, such as surveys and interviews, which may have inherent biases or limitations. Future research could explore alternative methods, such as longitudinal studies or participatory action research, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of minority experiences.
- **Contextual Factors:** The findings of our study may be influenced by contextual factors unique to District Peshawar. It is important to consider the broader socio-political and cultural context when interpreting the results. Comparative studies across different regions or countries could provide additional insights into the universality of our findings.

- **Temporal Considerations:** Our study represents a snapshot of the situation at a specific point in time. Future research could explore longitudinal trends to assess changes in the plight of minorities over time and identify emerging challenges or opportunities for intervention.
- In light of these limitations, future work in this area could focus on several avenues for further investigation:
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in the QoLI and related factors among minority communities over time, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their evolving circumstances.
- **Policy Evaluation:** Evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing the challenges faced by minority communities, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage directly with minority communities to co-design and implement interventions that are culturally sensitive, empowering, and responsive to their unique needs and aspirations.
- **International Comparative Studies:** Compare the experiences of minority communities in District Peshawar with those in other regions or countries, exploring similarities, differences, and lessons learned for policy and practice.

Recommendations

Drawing upon the insights gleaned from our study, we propose the following recommendations for potential interventions:

- **Enhanced Educational Initiatives:** Develop and implement targeted educational programs that promote diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness within the curriculum. Given the challenges faced by minority communities in accessing quality education, initiatives that foster understanding and tolerance can contribute to breaking down societal barriers.
- **Media Sensitization and Representation:** Collaborate with media outlets to ensure fair and accurate representation of minority communities, providing a platform for their voices and stories. The media plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions. Sensitizing media professionals and promoting inclusive content can contribute to dismantling stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive narrative.
- **Community Awareness Programs:** Launch community awareness programs that focus on promoting understanding, tolerance, and acceptance among different religious and ethnic groups. Building awareness and fostering positive attitudes within the community can contribute to reducing discrimination, religious biases, and social exclusion. Implementing these recommendations requires collaborative efforts from governmental bodies, educational institutions, media organizations, and community leaders. By addressing the identified challenges and fostering inclusivity, Peshawar can move towards becoming a more equitable and harmonious society where the strengths of diversity are celebrated.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Implement cultural sensitivity training programs for public officials, educators, and other key stakeholders to foster understanding and respect for diverse backgrounds. Integrate cultural competency modules into educational curricula to promote awareness from an early age.
- **Research and Data Collection:** Support ongoing research initiatives to continually monitor and assess the challenges faced by minority communities, ensuring that interventions remain responsive and effective. Establish partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations to enhance the depth and breadth of data collection.

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