

Harmonizing Interfaith Differences in Pakistan under Islamic Directions

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Abstract

Interfaith harmony requires both the promotion of good change and the cultivation of compassion and peace among followers of many religions. People from various religious origins communicate with one another both institutionally and interpersonally, which promotes a more positive outlook on politics and other national and international contacts in various nations. A compulsory code of behavior that a person, a group of people, and society as a whole should abide by in all things of the world is the cornerstone of the humanistic idea of virtue known as conformism. Because people are flawed and make mistakes, harmony helps people to grow and build themselves to the point where they are superior, teachable, and faultless. Peace and harmony can only be maintained in society if the rights of followers of all religions, including life, property, and the pursuit of happiness, are protected. This study's purpose is to explain how Islamic teachings in Pakistan might reconcile interfaith differences. The data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The University of Gujrat, Ghazi University, DG Khan, Swabi Women University, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar are among the four universities where the 220 questionnaires are distributed. Through the use of graphs and tables in the excel software, the students' opinions have been examined. As well as we approached different libraries to collect material i.e., Hameed Ullah, IIUI, Islamabad, Alama Iqbal Open University, SBBWUP, and Archive library Peshawar. As a result of our research, we have concluded that Pakistan is an Islamic country that fully protects minorities in all aspects of life. This includes the freedom to practice their religion following their beliefs, to visit places of worship without hindrance, to access educational opportunities, and to seek employment anywhere. Non-Muslims are reportedly to be treated better in Pakistan.

Keywords: Interfaith differences, Harmony Religions, Islamic Teachings, Humanity

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1. Introduction

The Latin word that gives rise to the English word harmony means "union, connection, attraction, and affinity".¹ An idealized scenario known as interfaith harmony comprises peaceful coexistence amongst followers of diverse religions intending to reduce the possibility of violent or non-violent conflict.² Interfaith harmony encourages tranquility and peace among the populace. People of different religious beliefs interact with one another on an individual and institutional level, which benefits their reputation in national politics. By enabling others to do the same, interfaith harmony encourages the maxim "live and let live." It leads to harmony and peace, two things that are desperately needed in a world riven by political and economic strife. It may also lead to prosperity. Islam is the finest religion, as it continually encourages patience and forbearance, as well as peace and protection for all, interfaith cooperation, and human respect. In the viewpoint of Islam, all people are equal, and extremism, sectarianism, and intolerance have no place in the religion.³ In Surah Al Imran, it is stated in these words: "Hold steadfastly on the path, Allah's rope, and do not be divided".⁴ Islamic values prioritize harmony, peace, equality, justice, and love and do not deprive anyone of their rights, whether they are Muslims or not. permits peaceful coexistence for everybody. Pakistan is a nation that adheres to Islam. In Pakistan, where 98 percent of the population practices Islam, it is the most common religion. It is a nonviolent religion that upholds everyone's rights, regardless of creed, caste, or race. The Pakistani constitution also guarantees the rights of every citizen. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said this during his historic speech to the Constituent Assembly. You are free to go to your churches, mosques, temples, and Gurdwaras. You are free to worship anywhere you desire in Pakistan, regardless of your affiliation with a religion, caste, or creed.⁵ The government won't impose an interruption on your religious activities. Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism are just a few of the several religions practiced in Pakistan.⁶ In addition, there are numerous sects and subsects within Muslims.⁷ Almost 96.28 percent of Pakistan's population is Muslim, and the remaining 3.72 percent is made up of minorities, such as Hindus (1.60 percent), Christians (1.59 percent), Ahmadis (0.22 percent), scheduled castes (0.25), and other religions (0.07 percent). The constitution of Pakistan states that everyone is free to practice their religion. In terms of race and religion, Pakistan is a diverse country. According to Islamic doctrine, there is only one All-Mighty Allah (SWT), and Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), the Seal of Prophets, is the last Prophet.⁸ Two general institutions from Punjab, the University of Gujrat and Ghazi University, DG Khan, and two women's universities from KPK, the SBBWUP and Women University Swabi, were chosen for this project. The first seminar was held at the University of Gujrat; the second, at Ghazi University,

DG Khan; the third, at Swabi Women's University; and the fourth and final session, at SBBWUP. More religious places were visited including Kartaarpur (the birthplace of Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism), the Cathedral Church of Peshawar, the Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh Dobgari Peshawar, the Guro Gorakh Nath Saiwa Mandhli Peshawar, and the Masjid Mohabbat Khan Peshawar, this mosque is four hundred years old. These are all important places of worship. We also visited the libraries at Hameed Ullah, IIUI, Islamabad, and Alama Iqbal Open University to obtain the data we required for the research.

1.1. Basic Question of the Research

The reconciling interfaith differences in Pakistan are explained under Islamic guidance in this research paper.

1.2. Hypotheses of the Research

To concentrate on this research study, a few hypotheses are developed such as,

- i. Interfaith harmony is a dire need to create a peaceful environment in society.
- ii. Islamic principles should be emphasized in every area of life because Islam is a religion of peace and harmony.
- iii. People of all faiths are completely free in their religious practice in Pakistan.
- iv. Government is in charge of ensuring the safety of non-Muslims' lives, property, and honor.

2. Literature Review

Several libraries, including the SBBWU in Peshawar, the University of Peshawar, the Archive Peshawar Library, the University of Gujrat in Punjab, and the Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab, were visited for this qualitative and quantitative research project. Books, journals, newspapers, articles, websites, and dissertations were used to collect the data. Examples of sources include "Interfaith Harmony in the Light of Sira Nabavi," and "Efforts to Create an Ideal Society in the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah" in the magazine Minhaj-ul-Quran International. What sort of attitude should Muslims have toward those who practice non-Muslim religions and civilizations in Pakistani culture, following Islamic teachings? The agreement with the Najrani people, allowing Christians to worship in the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Mosque (Masjid-e-Nabawi), Hudaibiyah peace and religious harmony, contemporary and benefit from Sira Tayyaba are a few examples of manifestations of religious harmony during the Prophet's time that reflect Islamic aspects in this dialogue.⁹ The author of the online link "Harmony Between Religions

and Sects," peer Dr. Ali Raza Bukhari, provided another source. According to the cited source, a roundtable discussion was held in collaboration with the European Union and the Interfaith Council for Peace and Harmony Pakistan to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding to sustain an environment of harmony. The gathering was attended by diplomats from several nations, scholars, clergymen, and representatives of other religions. The conversation aimed to promote tolerance and get rid of sectarianism and fundamentalism in religion.¹⁰ The study of another source focused on the "Emphasis on the removal of discriminatory societal attitudes for interfaith harmony." In his remarks on interfaith cooperation, "Jalil Akhtar" emphasized the rights of minorities living in Pakistan. He also intended to eradicate stereotypes, religious intolerance, and social prejudice. Pakistan has laws in place to protect the rights of both Muslim and minority populations. Therefore, non-Muslim rights ought to be upheld.¹¹ In another topic, "Interfaith harmony Conspiracy or the Need for Time," the discussion focused on "examining the viewpoints and ideas of two groups that advocate and oppose interfaith peace to reconcile the two parties' supportive and competing perspectives on interfaith harmony, as stated through arguments. "Requirements for Religious Tolerance and Harmony," in addition to a few one-day seminars where the rights of other non-Muslims were discussed, were organized under the direction of "Prof. Misbah-ur-Rehman Yousifi." The purpose of this goal was to discuss religious tolerance. Furthermore, it is preferable to embrace a mutual meeting and participate in social activities attitude, which eliminates many misconceptions, rather than adopting a political, economic, and societal boycott of other viewpoints. Collaboration on both a national and international level is made easier by harmony, which is one of the most important social needs of the modern world.¹² The topic of "A shining example of interfaith harmony, complete religious freedom in Pakistan" has been researched, and many facets of the value of interfaith harmony are covered in this dialogue, the biggest and most crucial of which is that all minorities can freely celebrate their holidays. The government is making every effort to help them and give them access to all the services they require. In the wake of "Kartaarpur," repairs are being made to churches and temples in addition to other amenities and furnishings.¹³ In an article titled "Interfaith Harmony and Pakistan," "Syed Ahmad Nadeem Qadri" discussed how to promote and publicize religious harmony as well as the locations of their sacred sites. He claims that there are numerous religious sites for minorities in Pakistan. Islam offers many examples of tolerance, and minorities have been permitted to practice their religion without interference in Pakistan from the inception of Islam till the present.¹⁴

3. Research Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative both methods are used in this research work.

3.1. Data Collection

The information was collected from several libraries, including Hameed Ullah, IIUI, Islamabad, Alama Iqbal Open University, SBBWUP, and Archive Library Peshawar, in the form of books, newspapers, journals, magazines, websites, etc. The students were selected from the University of Gujrat, Ghazi University, DG Khan, Swabi Women University, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, and questionnaires were designed and sent to them. The four seminars were conducted at the same universities to educate students about interfaith cooperation and to promote a peaceful society.

3.2. Sampling

The two hundred and twenty questionnaires were designed, and each questionnaire consisted of seventeen questions, the four universities were taken for subject matter as the University of Gujrat, Ghazi University, DG Khan, Swabi Women University, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, fifty-five questionnaires were distributed in every university to collect the opinion of the students.

3.3. Procedure

Two hundred and twenty survey forms were distributed among students, and the data was collected, analyzed, and displayed in various tables and shapes using the Excel program.

3.4. Statistical Review

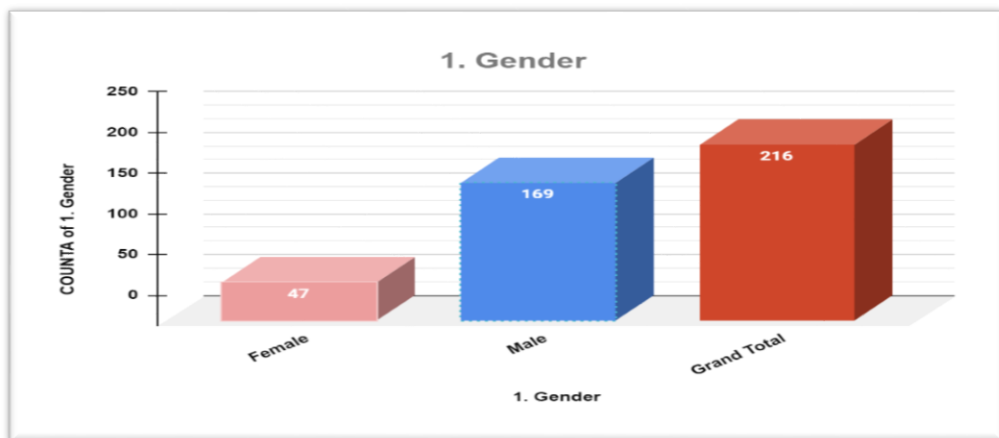
In this section, the result, discussion, and findings are explicated.

3.5. Result and Discussion

Table 01: Gender

<i>1. Gender</i>	COUNTA of 1. Gender
Female	47
Male	169
Grand Total	216

Diagram 01: Gender

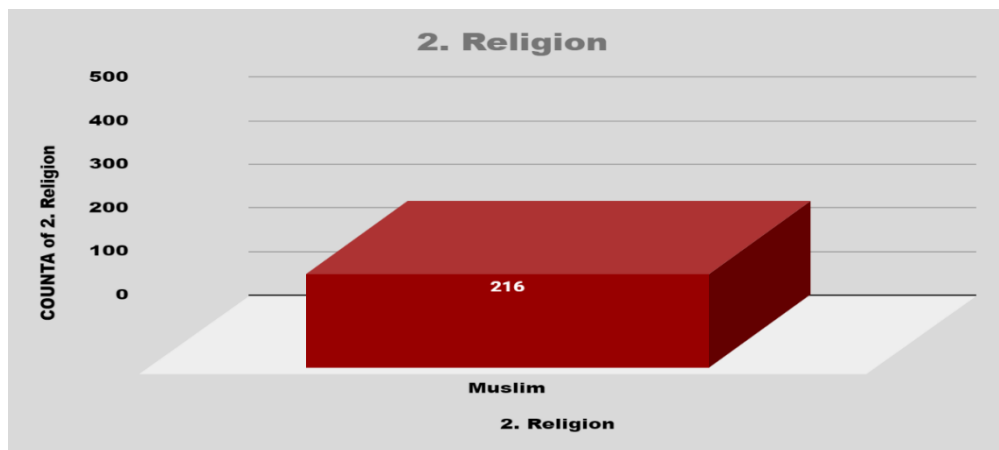


The above table and graph show gender. In this fieldwork, 47 females and 169 male submitted their views. The total gender (male and female) were 216.

Table 02: Religion

2. Religion	COUNTA of 2. Religion
	0
Muslim	216
Grand Total	216

Diagram 02: Religion



In the mentioned table and diagram display the religion. 216 Muslims gave their views regarding harmonizing interfaith differences in Pakistan under Islamic direction.

Table 03: Age

3. Age	COUNTA of 3. Age
	0
(19-29)	185
(30-45)	19
(46 -60)	4
(61-Above)	1
Grand Total	209

Diagram 03: Age

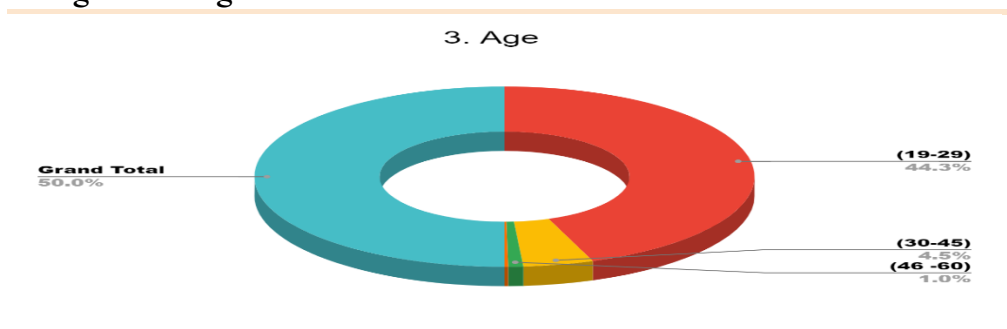
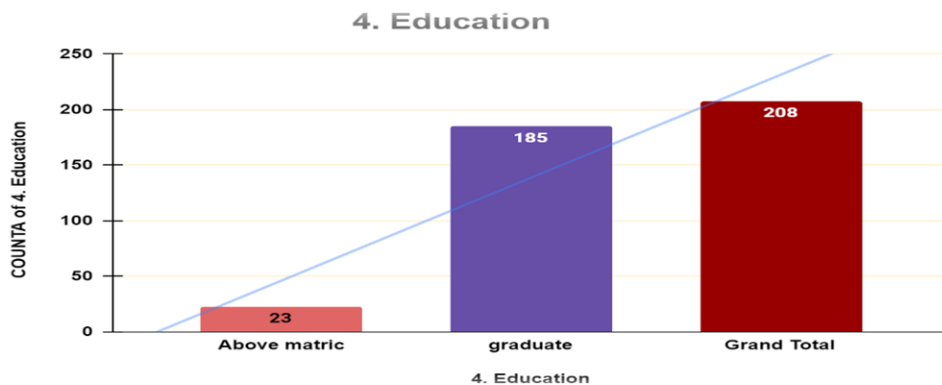


Table 03 and Diagram 03 shows that the respondents were between the ages of 19 and 29, 30 to 45, 46 to 60, and (61 above). The total respondents were 209 for said table and diagram.

Table 04: Education

4. Education	COUNTA of 4. Education
	0
Above matric	23
graduate	185
and Total	208

Diagram 04: Education

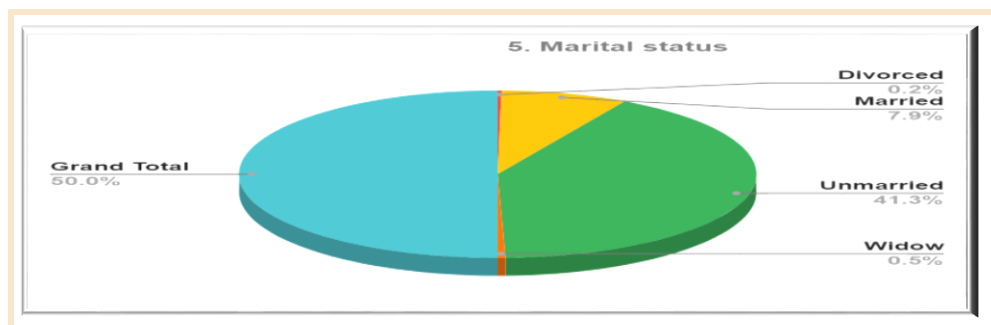


The education is mentioned in table 04 and diagram 04, in this fieldwork, the responders were above matric and graduate. The above matric was 23 and the graduate was 185. Here we colled data from 208 respondents.

Table 05: Marital Status

5. Marital status	COUNTA of 5. Marital status
	0
Divorced	1
Married	33
Unmarried	172
Widow	2
Grand Total	208

Diagram 05: Marital Status

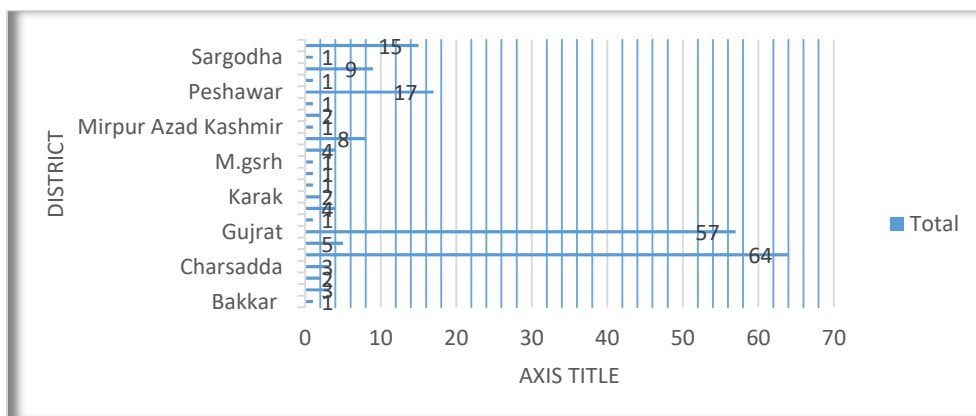


In the above table and diagram, we found data from 208 respondents, of which one divorcee, thirty-three were married, one hundred and seventy-two were unmarried and two was a widow.

Table 06: District

6. District	Sum of Quantity
Bakkar	1
Bhimber	3
Buner	2
Charsadda	3
DG Khan	64
Gujranwala	5
Gujrat	57
Haripur	1
Jehlum	4
Karak	2
Kech	1
Lahore	1
M.gsrh	1
Mandi Bahauddin	4
Mirpur	8
Mirpur Azad Kashmir	1
Muzaffar Garh	2
Muzaffarabad	1
Peshawar	17
Punjab	1
Sialkot	9
Sargodha	1
Swabi	15
Grand Total	204

Diagram 06: District

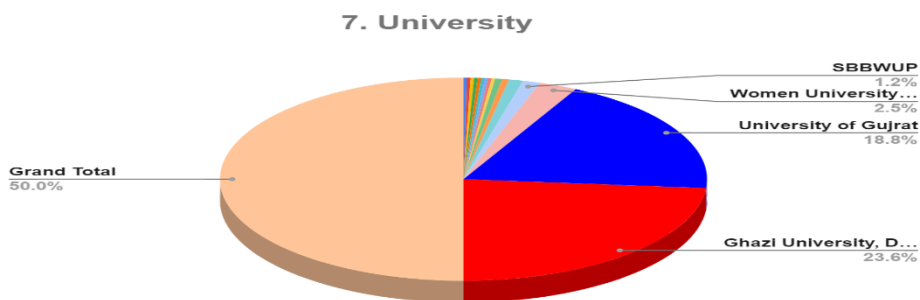


Different districts of KPK and Punjab are shown in table 06 and figure 06 respectively. The 204 responders revealed their districts.

Table 07: University

7. University	COUNTA of 7. University
SBBWU PESHAWAR	1
SBBWUP	1
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	1
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	1
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	1
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	1
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	1
Women University Swabi	1
Women University Swabi	1
Woman University Swabi	2
Woman University Swabi	2
SBBWU	4
SBBWUP	5
Women University Swabi	11
University of Gujrat	81
Ghazi University, DGKhan	102
Grand Total	216

Diagram 07: University

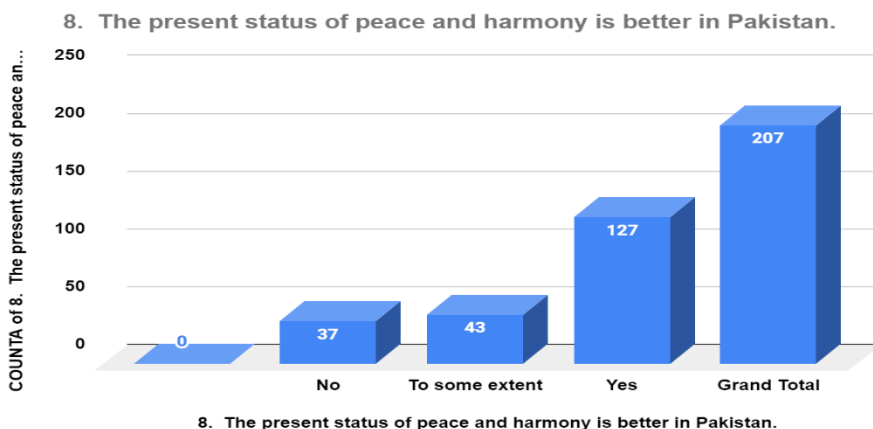


In this fieldwork, we took four Universities as SBBWUP, Women University Swabi, University of Gujrat, and Ghazi University, DG Khan.

Table 08: The present status of peace and harmony is better in Pakistan.

<i>8. The present status of peace and harmony is better in Pakistan.</i>	COUNTA of 8. The present status of peace and harmony is better in Pakistan.
No	0
To some extent	37
Yes	43
Grand Total	127

Diagram 08: The present status of peace and harmony is better in Pakistan.

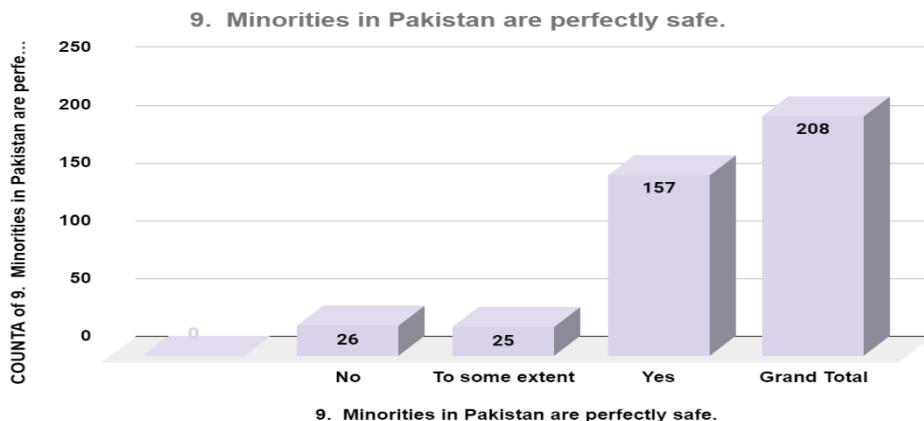


We had 127 yes responses and 43 to some extent responses when the question concerning the current situation was posed. This indicates that the majority of students believe Pakistan's current state of peace and harmony is favorable.

Table 09: Minorities in Pakistan are perfectly safe.

<i>9. Minorities in Pakistan are perfectly safe.</i>	COUNTA of 9. Minorities in Pakistan are perfectly safe.
No	0
To some extent	26
Yes	25
Grand Total	157

Diagram 09: Minorities in Pakistan are perfectly safe.

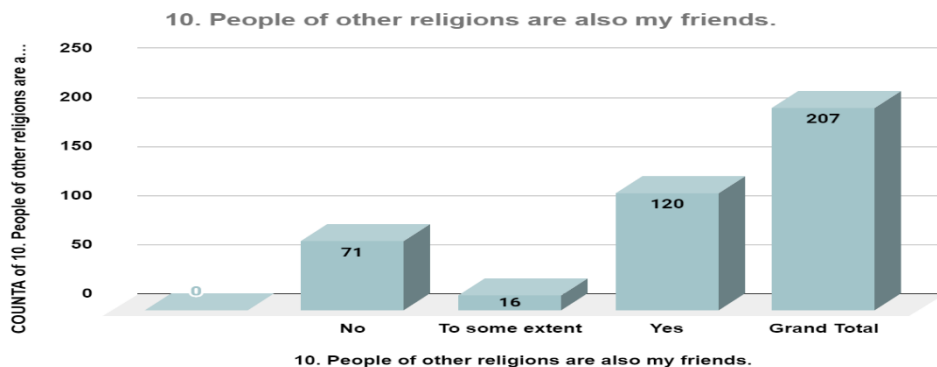


When the above-mentioned question was asked, hence we got 157 responses yes, and 43 to some extent responses. It means that the majority of the students agreed that the minorities in Pakistan are perfectly safe.

Table 10: People of other religions are also my friends.

10. People of other religions are also my friends.	COUNTA of 10. People of other religions are also my friends.
No	0
To some extent	71
Yes	16
	120

Diagram 10: People of other religions are also my friends.



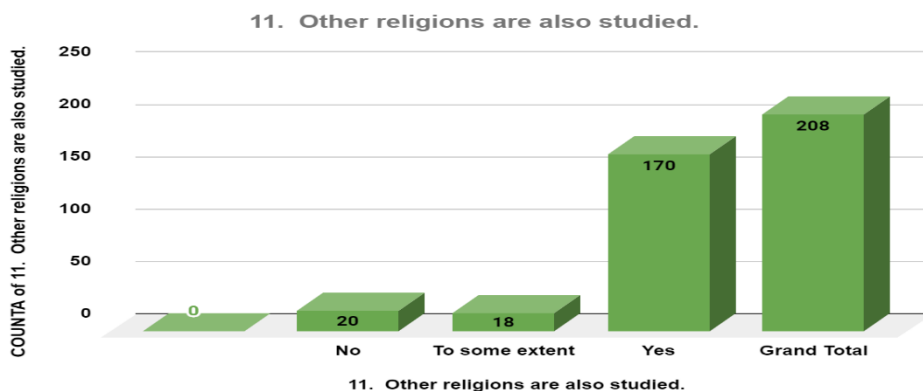
The asking question was very interesting i.e., people of other religions are also my friends, so we got 120 responses for yes from different universities such as SBBWUP,

Women University Swabi, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, and the University of Gujrat.

Table 11: Other religions are also studied.

<i>11. Other religions are also studied.</i>	COUNTA of 11. Other religions are also studied.
No	0
To some extent	20
Yes	18
Grand Total	208

Diagram 11: Other religions are also studied.

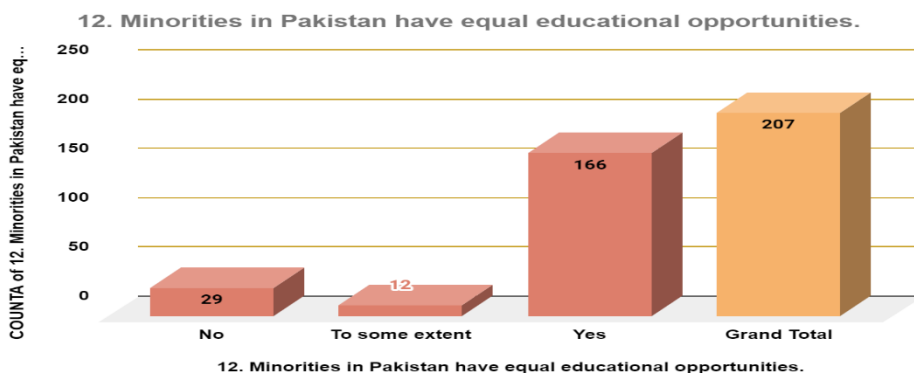


We asked students, they studied other religions, and we found 170 answers yes. It means most of the students agreed and they showed through their responses that they studied other religions.

Table 12: Minorities in Pakistan have equal educational opportunities.

<i>12. Minorities in Pakistan have equal educational opportunities.</i>	COUNTA of 12. Minorities in Pakistan have equal educational opportunities.
No	0
To some extent	29
Yes	12
Grand Total	207

Diagram 12: Minorities in Pakistan have equal educational opportunities.

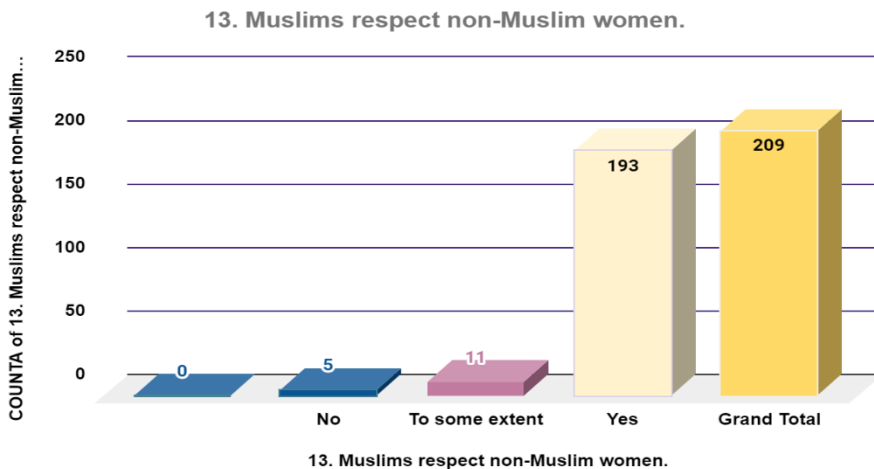


During the survey, we got responses 166 responses for yes regarding the above-mentioned question.

Table 13: Muslims respect non-Muslim women.

13. Muslims respect non-Muslim women.	COUNTA of 13. Muslims respect non-Muslim women.
No	0
To some extent	5
Yes	11
Grand Total	209

Diagram 13: Muslims respect non-Muslim women.



During the survey, when the question was asked that Muslims respect non-Muslim women, so we found 193 responses yes. It means in Pakistan respect is given to a non-Muslim woman.

Table 14: Minorities in Pakistan have equal employment opportunities.

<i>14. Minorities in Pakistan have equal employment opportunities.</i>	COUNTA of 14. Minorities in Pakistan have equal employment opportunities.
No	0
To some extent	36
Yes	24
Grand Total	207

Diagram 14: Minorities in Pakistan have equal employment opportunities.

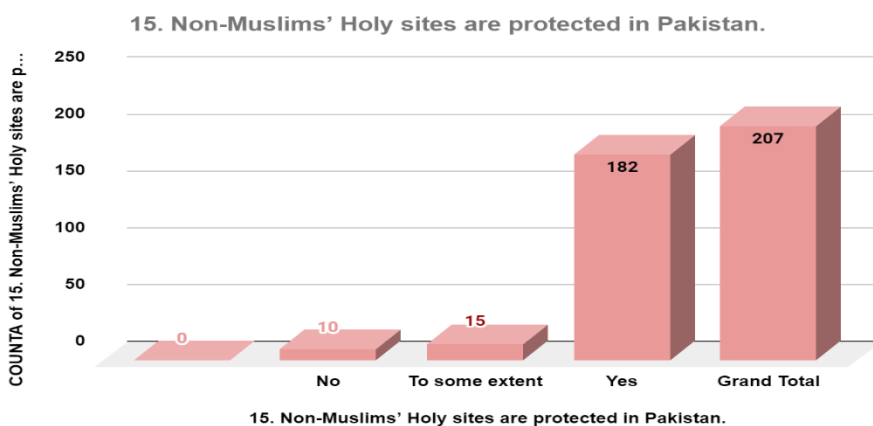


Regarding the above-mentioned question, we gathered 147 responses for yes.

Table 15: Non-Muslims' Holy sites are protected in Pakistan.

<i>15. Non-Muslims Holy sites are protected in Pakistan.</i>	COUNTA of 15. Non-Muslim Holy sites are protected in Pakistan.
No	0
To some extent	10
Yes	15
Grand Total	207

Diagram 15: Non-Muslims Holy sites are protected in Pakistan.

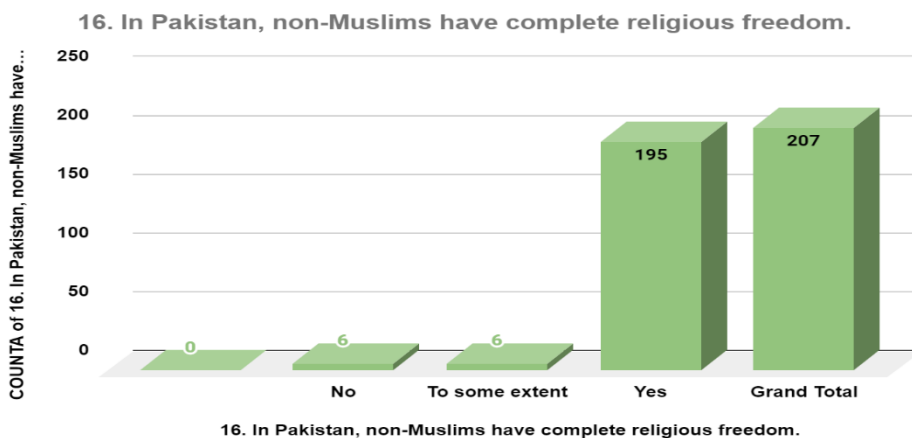


We collected 182 answers yes regarding the mentioned question.

Table 16: In Pakistan, non-Muslims have complete religious freedom.

Diagram 16: In Pakistan, non-Muslims have complete religious freedom.

16. In Pakistan, non-Muslims have complete religious freedom.	COUNTA of 16. In Pakistan, non-Muslims have complete religious freedom.
No	0
To some extent	6
Yes	195
Grand Total	207



Regarding the question, 195 students displayed their affirmative responses.

Table 17: In Pakistan, non-Muslims celebrate their customs with complete freedom.

<i>17. In Pakistan, non-Muslims celebrate their customs with complete freedom.</i>	COUNTA of 17. In Pakistan, non-Muslims celebrate their customs with complete freedom.
	0
No	5
To some extent	7
Yes	195
Grand Total	207

Diagram 17: In Pakistan, non-Muslims celebrate their customs with complete freedom.



When we questioned students if non-Muslims could practice their traditions freely in Pakistan, we received 195 affirmative responses. That was a positive indication that Pakistan cares for all the traditions and customs of non-Muslim populations as well as the safety of those communities.

4. Findings

Our research led us to the conclusion that Pakistan is an Islamic country that provides full protection to minorities in all facets of life, including the ability to observe religious rituals and traditions in peace, travel freely to places of worship, access educational opportunities, and the ability to apply for jobs in all locations just like

Muslims. Non-Muslim women are also accorded the same respect as Muslim women. Non-Muslims are reportedly treated better in Pakistan.

5. Suggestions and Recommendations

There are some suggestions and recommendations.

5.1. Social Aspects

- The safety of the basic rights of minorities is our first responsibility.
- They are the nation of Pakistan and they are called Pakistani, therefore they have safe all rights like Muslims.
- They can perform their religious rituals in Pakistan.

5.2. Physical Aspects

- We should look after the worship places of the Non-Muslim community.
- The government of Pakistan should provide all the rights of the Non-Muslim community including education facilities, treatment facilities, job facilities, etc.
- We should give respect to all women whether she is a Muslim or non-Muslim.

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