

# Religious Commitment Level Among the Petra University Students

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## Abstract

This study aimed at revealing the level of religious commitment shown by the students of the University of Petra. The study sample consisted of 602 of both male and female students. In order to measure the level of this commitment, the researcher used criteria whose reliability and consistency were confirmed. In general, the study results showed a high level of commitment in the three study areas: faith, worship, and ethics. Also, the study results had shown differences of statistical indication in the level of religious commitment attributed to the gender variable in favor of the female students. On the other hand, the results had shown no differences of statistical indication that could be attributed to the college variable.

**Keywords:** Religious Commitment, Al-Islam, Petra Private University

## 1. Introduction

Al-Islam, according to the religious concept, is the religion introduced by the prophet Mohammed, and Al-Sharia with which the Supreme God concluded the heaven missions. The prophet Mohammed, prayer and peace upon him, took the responsibility of conveying this religion and its jurisdiction to all people. Also, the prophet urged people to abandon the worship of idols. Al-Islam requires submission of the Muslims to his creator, and the surrender of his mind and heart to the greatness and perfection of God. Also, Al-Islam requires the absolute belief in the unity of God. This religion covers worships, transactions, ethics, faith, rules which the prophet Mohammed was ordered by God to convey to all people.

Al-Islam has three basic fundamentals: faith, legislation, and ethics. The faith is defined as the absolute belief in God and his angels, heavenly books, prophets, and the hereafter day. Also, the faith in God requires the belief in fate and divine decree, all religious texts, and divine secrets and affairs. Whereas legislature is Al-Sharia jurisdiction based on the holy Qura'n and Al-Sunna that includes worships and transactions which the prophet was instructed to apply. Ethics were given high priority in Al-Qura'n and Al-Sunna by designating one fourth of the Qura'n verses to deal with ethics.

Ethics play a basic role in shaping the Moslem's personality and directing it towards good welfare. Ethics are legal jurisdiction based on Islamic faith. It is the supreme goal of the Islamic Education and the fruit of Islam embodied in the Moslem's behavior. By virtue of the Islamic ethics, the Muslim becomes the most beloved person to the prophet Mohammed (Rayan et al, 1996).

## The Concept of Religious Commitment

This concept indicates the commitment of the Muslim to what is given in the Qura'n and Sunna including values, principles, fundamentals, and religious ideals in accordance with the actual social life of the Islamic society (Ali, 2004). The researcher defines this concept as the commitment of the individual Muslim and his adherence to the three basic fundamentals of Islam: faith, legislature, and ethics. The religious commitment makes the believer gets the taste of faith and the knowledge of Allah and being close to Him. (Mosa, 1999).

Religious commitment is considered one of the significant elements that contributes to developing the personality of university students and preparing them effectively so that they can face their challenges with faith and power. University students are in need for a comfortable academic environment and psychological life due to their critical age and the nature of their challenging study (Hamadani, 2005).

Albort considered this concept as an important variable in shaping the individual's personality, and also useful in understanding the religious duties. Also, he defined the concept as the way in which the person practices his beliefs and religious values (Earnshaw, 2000). Accordingly, Albort suggested two kinds of religious commitment:

- 1- Genuine religious commitment.
- 2- Superficial religious commitment.

Followers of the first kind of favoritism practice and commit themselves to a real religious life, and consider the social aspects of religion unimportant. Therefore, they have an in-depth commitment to their religious beliefs and values, and they are ready to sacrifice for them.

On the other hand, followers of the second kind of favoritism abuse the religion and exploit it for their personal utilization to provide them with a comfortable life and support in order to meet the life challenges. Also, these followers use religion as a tool to satisfy their own objectives such as getting a job or having a position acceptable to the society. (Gallant, 2001)

The Social Factors which affect the Religious Commitment Level:

- Family: studies have proved that the family has a main role in determining the individual behavior.
- Peers/Friends: Friends affect the individual behavior in a dramatic way due to personal and social factors.
- The Educational Institutions: in various educational levels such as schools, institutes and universities.
- Worshipping Places: represented by Mosques which has the effective role in increasing the religious commitment level to the individual.
- Media: It has a double-edge weapon in which it can be used in good and bad deeds. Media should be employed in the positive side. (Qe'eb, 2003)

Religion is essential for the welfare of individuals and societies. As long as the society keeps away from its religious and faith fundamentals, corruption and chaos prevail the social relationships and ethical principles. Certainly, the adherence to the religious values is an effective tool to resist the weakness of spiritual life in the modern society.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Religious commitment is considered as one of the main variables in building the university student personality in ethical and believed manners. It surrounds them with a great fence of psychological welfare and protects them from exposing to the mental and psychological crises and diseases. This commitment provides all reasons of adaptation, harmony and positive interaction with the community which enables the youth to be hard-working and productive (Saleh, 2007).

This problem initiated as a result of the researcher interest to reveal the level of religious commitment of the students at Petra Private University in Jordan. This interest was mainly due to the great effect of this commitment in shaping the personality of students and establishing relations with God, themselves, and others. The study tries to answer two main questions:

- What is level of religious commitment of the students at Petra Private University?
- Is there any difference in the level of the religious commitment of the students at Petra University due to the gender and college variables?

### **1.2. Objectives of the study**

This study aims at identifying the level of religious commitment at Petra Private University, and showing if there are any differences in this level attributed to the gender or college variable.

### **1.3. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is reflected by the following points:

- This study is genuine as it is the first time such a study is conducted in Jordan to the best of my knowledge.
- This study would benefit those who are specialized in the Islamic Education or those involved in the student affairs at the Petra Private University. The study would help concerned personnel to recognize the level of religious commitment of students, and suggest appropriate solutions for any commitment weakness, if exists. Also, it encourages education specialists to develop religious programs that support and maintain a high commitment level.

### **1.4. Limitations of the study**

The study is limited to the knowledge of the religious commitment level between Petra University students and its relationship to some variables.

\*Temporal Limitations: The study was conducted in the summer semester of the scholastic year 2011/2012.

\* Spatial Limitations: The study was conducted at Petra University in Jordan.

\* Human Limitations: A sample of Petra University students was selected from different faculties and disciplines. Moreover, the study is limited to the tool used which is the religious commitment.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

Due to the importance of investigating the level of religious commitment of individuals, many researchers from Arab and foreign countries and from various universities have conducted studies to measure the level of religious commitment of survey samples. Fatma Saleh has conducted a study in (2007) in order to acknowledge the level of religious commitment of the Islamic Sciences Faculty students in general. The sample was from (159) students in which the religious commitment was used as a measure. The study has come to a conclusion that the students enjoy high level of religious commitment and males outperform females in this regard.

Hajjar and Ridwan (2006) were seeking to recognize the students' level of religious commitment in Islamic University at Ghaza in aspects of gender, academic level and faculty. The sample was from (370) students. The researchers have used a questionnaire with 27 questions to measure the students' intention to being religiously

committed. The results have found that females and Arts Faculty students have outperformed other students regarding their commitment.

Another study by Barkat (2006) has aimed at acknowledging the impact of religious commitment in social and psychological adaptation and its relationship with some variables. The sample consisted of (200) students (100) males and (100) females in Alquds Open University. The study has found a fundamental effect towards students' commitment in their level of social and psychological adaptation. Moreover, an effect was found to the following variables: gender, specialization and age (females, educational specialization and less 23 years students respectively).

Hamdani (2005) has measured the connection between the religious commitment and locus of control of the Tkrit students. The sample consisted of (1084) students. The findings have revealed that the students have high level of commitment in males more than females, and in scientific specialization students than humanitarian ones. Another study was conducted on (498) Quran Teaching Methodologies students in Baghdad University by Hadi (2004). The study aimed at recognizing the level of religious commitment between the students. The results came to conclusion that the university students enjoy high level of commitment and those who are studying in Quran Teaching Methodologies departments outperform those in other departments. No effect was found with respect of the academic level students are in with their religious commitment.

Dorman et al (2002) have conducted a study to tackle the connection between the psychological atmosphere of religion students and their academic outputs. The sample was from 1317 students in high schools in Australia. The findings have reached to the conclusion that there is an important relationship between students intention to the Christianity and the social and psychological atmosphere.

Naseef (2001) has tackled the relationship between the religious commitment and the psychological security on Sanaa' students in accordance with some variables. The sample consisted of (300) students. The researcher has used the measure of the religious commitment he has prepared. The results have revealed that there is a strong tied relationship between the religious commitment and psychological security. There is no statistical difference between both ascribed to the gender or specialization.

Being Kheder (2000) has sought to recognize the probable relationship between being religious and one-sided-mental character bearing in mind the variable (gender) in mind in the Kuwaiti society. The sample consisted of (244) people. Females have got higher averages than males in worshipping aspects.

Moheish (1999) has aimed at recognizing the relationship between the religious commitment and the psychological health on a sample of Education Faculty students in King Faisal University in Alehsaa. The study was conducted on (234) students. The researcher has used a measure for the religious commitment and another for the psychological health. The results have shown that there is no difference with statistical connotation in the religious commitment in accordance with the academic major or level.

The majority of previous studies have shown good level of religious commitment of individuals being studies. The researcher couldn't find a single study conducted in Jordan to measure the religious commitments of individuals, especially university students.

### **3. Methodology and Procedures**

#### **3.1. Study Sample**

The study was formed of (602) male and female students covering various colleges of Petra Private University. All students were enrolled in the summer semester of the scholastic year 2011/2012.

#### **3.2. Study Tool**

In order to meet the study objectives, a standard scale was structured and developed through reviewing relevant education literature and previous studies such as the study of Saleh (2007) and Al-Qudra (2007). The scale has 34 sections distributed over three areas: faith, worship, and ethics. The reliability and consistency of the scale were both confirmed.

#### **3.3. Data Analysis:**

SPSS was used to analyze the study results using the statistical treatments: Averages, Deviation Standards and Independent t-test.

### **4. Study Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1. The results of the 1<sup>st</sup> Question**

This question states: What is the level of religious commitment of students at Petra Private University? In order to find out the level of religious commitment of students, and for the purpose of statistical analysis, the researcher used the Arithmetic Mean and the Standard Deviation to analyze the responses of the study sample individuals for each area. After that, the Arithmetic Means were explained according to the following scale:

- 1.0-2.33: low level of religious commitment
- 2.34-3.67: average level of religious commitment

- 3.68-5.0: high level of religious commitment

Table 1: The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Religious Commitment Level of Students at Petra University in the Area of **Faith**.

Section No.	Sections	No.	Mean	Deviation	Rank	Commitment Level
1	I think the believer who believes in God, his prophets, and his heaven books.	602	4.8040	0.52058	7	High
2	I think the believer who believes in the angels and hereafter day.	602	4.8239	0.50839	6	High
3	I do believe in resurrection after death.	602	4.9136	0.39864	1	High
4	I take the prophet Mohammed as my ideal in every matter.	602	4.5216	0.76554	9	High
5	I think the believer ought to be afraid from the supreme God.	602	4.8870	0.55977	2	High
6	I think the believer is the one who relies on God in everything.	602	4.8837	0.37797	3	High
7	I think the believer is the one who magnifies the glory Qura'n.	602	4.8671	0.41872	5	High
8	I believe that the mercy of God accommodates everything.	602	4.8837	0.45762	4	High
9	I think that adultery weakens the faith of the Muslim.	602	4.6844	0.79310	8	High
Total Sections		602	4.807	0.271		High

Table 1: shows that the Arithmetic Mean of all faith sections was 4.80. This indicates that the religious commitment of the study sample to the faith area is generally high. It has also been observed that the commitment level of study participants to all faith sections was high and their Arithmetic Means values were in the range 4.52 and 4.91. The researcher attributed this result to the effective education of the Muslim families that insert faith in the minds and hearts of their sons at an early stage.

Table 2: The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Religious Commitment Level of Students at Petra University in the Area of **Worship**.

Sec.No.	Section	No.	Mean	Deviation	Rank	Level
10	I keep my vision from looking at anything forbidden by God.	602	1.7973	1.12547	10	Low
11	I endeavor to command welfare and prohibit evil actions.	602	4.6246	0.73101	3	High
12	I think the believer is devoted to his parents.	602	4.8505	0.47665	1	High
13	I perform prayers on time.	602	4.0066	1.03191	9	High
14	I give charity to poor people as much as I can.	602	4.0432	0.91655	8	High
15	I strive to treat my sins by repentances.	602	4.1561	0.92238	5	High
16	I spend Ramadan days by performing worship and disregarding forbidden actions.	602	4.1362	0.85838	6	High
17	I have the desire to read Qura'n.	602	1.7143	0.99153	11	Low
18	Whenever I am in trouble, I resort to God.	602	4.7807	0.57551	2	High
19	I am planning to perform pilgrim.	602	4.1362	1.15001	7	High
20	I think it is a must to make up for a prayer whose time is missed.	602	4.3455	0.97569	4	High
Total Sections		602	3.871	0.547		High

Table 2: Shows that the Arithmetic Mean of all worship sections was 3.871. This indicates that the level commitment of students to the worship was generally high. Also, it has been observed that the majority of worship sections showed high commitment. The researcher believes that the result of the worship commitment is logical as it is a positive reflection to the faith commitment. The only exception to this result is sections 10 and 17 that showed low commitment. The Arithmetic Means of the Sections 10 and 17 were 1.797 and 1.714 consecutively. The low commitment of students in these two sections has a negative effect on the future religious commitment. As believed by the researcher, the result of section 10 is attributed to the uncontrolled co-education

at Petra University which is considered an obvious legal violation to the principles of Islam. Also, the lack of interest to read Qura'n leads to not following its instructions, and ultimately, separating the Muslim from Qura'n.

Table 3: The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Religious Commitment Level of Students at Petra University in the Area of **Ethics**

Sec.No.	Section	No.	Mean	Deviation	Rank	Level
21	I think the believer is the one who gives back the deposition in trust to its owner.	602	4.8206	0.48372	1	High
22	I consider the cooperation based on welfare and devotion a legal duty.	602	4.5847	0.75455	1	High
23	I tried to be fair in my judgment on others	602	4.4452	0.73953	5	High
24	I strive to conciliate between conflicting parties.	602	4.1395	0.94109	9	High
25	I tried to accompany good devoted Muslims	<b>602</b>	<b>1.4850</b>	<b>1.03062</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Low</b>
26	I never express anger or complaint to my father..	602	4.1694	0.90176	8	High
27	I tried to think well towards others.	<b>602</b>	<b>3.6336</b>	<b>0.95299</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Average</b>
28	My fear from God, not my prestige that prevents me making relation with the other gender.	602	4.04219	0.91832	6	High
29	I tried not to be hostile or unfair with others.	602	4.4850	0.76353	4	High
30	I control my emotions in case of anger or sadness.	<b>602</b>	<b>1.4651</b>	<b>1.20300</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Low</b>
31	I prevent myself from prohibited attractive actions.	602	4.0532	0.99106	11	High
32	It is impossible to give false testimony to rescue a dear person.	602	4.3854	1.05316	7	High
33	I never kill a human being forbidden by God unless it is legally allowed.	602	4.7608	0.77132	2	High
34	I tried to remove any trash thrown on the way.	602	4.1296	0.93008	10	High
	Total Sections	602	3.926	0.408		High

Table 3: Shows that the Arithmetic Mean of all ethics sections was 3.926. This indicates that the level commitment of students to the ethics was generally high. Also, it has been observed that the majority of ethics sections showed high commitment except section 27 that showed an average level with an average level with an arithmetic Mean of 3.633. Also, the two sections 25 and 30 showed low level with an Arithmetic Mean of 1.48 and 1.46 consecutively. The researcher explained these results by noting that some students have no interest to establish friendship with highly committed students due to a wrong conception that such students are isolated and not willing to be sociable. This wrong conception needs to be corrected. In addition, the researcher realized the danger of having weak control over our emotions in case of anger that would lead in the future to a phenomenon of violence between the students of Petra University. Also, the researcher believes that if the Muslim is strictly adhered to his faith, he will develop high Islamic ethics that are in harmony with his faith and vice versa.

In general, the researcher noted that the high level of commitment in the three areas is expected in the conserved Jordanian society that is characterized by its adherence to its faith, traditions, values, and principles that are taken from the Islamic religion that ensure an organized, secured and comfortable life.

#### 4.2. Results related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Question

This question states: Is there any difference in the level of the religious commitment of the students at Petra University due to the gender and college variables? In order to answer this question, the researcher used the T-test and the following two tables illustrate this:

Table 4: The Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, and "T" values of the Religious Commitment Level of Students at Petra University Based on Gender Variable

Gender	No.	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	d.f	sig
Male	287	4.3544	0.35955	- 2.181	600	0.030*
Female	315	4.4157	0.33022			

\*Statistical indication at the level  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

Table 4: Shows the existence of differences with statistical indication between the Arithmetic Means of the religious commitment of students at Petra University attributed to the gender variable in favor of female students. This means that female students showed higher level of religious commitment due to the traditions of the society

which imposed restrictions, acceptable to the conservative Jordanian society, on the behavior of females. Whereas the male students do not pay attention to these traditions due to their different Psychological, social, and physiological nature. It is of note that this result is in agreement with the results reported by Hajjar & Ridwan (2006), Barakat (2006) and Kheder (2000) that showed the superiority of females over males in the level of religious commitment. On the other hand, this result does not agree with the result reported by Saleh (2007) and Hamadani (2005).

Table 5: The Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, and “T” values of the Religious Commitment Level of Students at Petra University Based on College Variable

College	No.	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	d.f	sig
Science	336	4.4098	0.35921	1.870	600	0.062
Humanity	266	4.3569	0.32585			

Table 5: shows no differences with statistical indication between the Arithmetic Means of the religious commitment of students at Petra University attributed to the college variable. This means that the level of religious commitment of students is the same whether they are in the Science or Humanity College. This result is in agreement with the study results reported by Naseef (2001) and Moheish (1999) that showed no differences with statistical indication in the level of religious commitment attributed to the college variable. But this result differs from the study results reported by Hajjar & Ridwan (2006), Barakat (2006), Hadi (2004) and Hamadani (2005) that showed differences with statistical indication in the level of religious commitment attributed to the college variable.

### 5. Recommendations for Further Study

In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Take care of the ethical and spiritual education and concentrate on teaching the youth, especially males, the religious values.
- Provide college students with an in-depth knowledge of religious commitment in the three basic fundamentals: faith, legislation, and ethics through study curricula.
- Introduce the course of “Principles of Islamic Fiqh” as a university requirement.
- Conduct a scientific study to know the factors that affect the level of religious commitment of students at the Jordanian Universities.

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