

## Music Liking and Religiosity: Analyzing Muslim Music Listeners in Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

The study aims at presenting the state of mind of present-day Muslim music listeners in Pakistani society. It lies on the general impression about the status of music in Islam that presents music as not favored. On the other side, the growing rate of musical elements in the television, radio channels of Pakistan along with huge consumption through social media proves popularity of music. For the purpose, a quasi-experimental test was conducted on a sample of 100 respondents selected randomly. Respondents` religiosity level was measured through a pre-test questionnaire developed on 5 points Likert scale. Then the respondents are exposed to a popular music number used as a stimulus material following by a questionnaire investigating their music liking level. The scores of the posttest questionnaire developed on second variable of music liking were correlated with the pretest questionnaire`s scores. The result indicated a strong relationship between religiosity and music liking of the taken respondents.

## Introduction and Rationale

As a system adopted for averting evils and bringing blessings to its followers or an expression having the sense of dependence on an outside power, religion has been a field of discussion in many academic disciplines. Researchers have been intrigued by describing religious individuals and religious experience. (Allport & Ross, 1967; Otterbeck, 2008; Ok & Erdal, 2015; Cox, 2016)

Since religion has been taken as a code that affects every life area of a follower, religiosity is the degree of affiliation for the followers towards religion (Bukhari 2006). By providing a philosophy of leading life, every religion tends to limit the lifestyles of its followers in the circle of its dos and don'ts including selection of entertainment resources and provides different interpretations of entertainment bonds. Religiosity works as a driving force that has lasting impact on entertainment choices of followers too. (Brown, 1999; Asari, 2005; Cox, 2016)

On discussing the intrinsic inclination towards art, feelings and love for beauty are the integral part of man's nature. Though, it is hard to define the very nature of beauty as self perception changes from person to person, but the presence of a sense of "liking" or "disliking" is evident in human beings. Eaton (1988) asserts that the liking and not liking or disliking something are two entirely independent entities and by getting the world of abstraction, it is hard enough to determine a strict yardstick between them. The problems of defining beauty are addressed under an eminent branch of Philosophy "Aesthetics", commonly known as the science of beauty or the "Philosophy of Art". Art is discussed under this branch of wisdom containing all expressive responses of human beings in the forms of paintings, poetry, Sculptures, Music, Architecture etc. Budd (1998) divides the subject into two parts: the philosophy of art, and the philosophy of the aesthetic experience. The distinction noticeably divides the phenomenon of Aesthetics in the two segments; *Creation* of an item by the artist and its *Consumption* from the receivers as how they like or dislike or evaluate the item on their own standards of beauty.

Schafer et al (2013) claimed music listening as one of the most enigmatic and mystifying human behaviors. Music is observed to be the ubiquitous

part of everyday life of people. It is recognized to be one of the most popular leisure activities. Music listeners spend time, energy and money to gratify their music listening. It is evident that today consumers decide what they want to watch or listen and at what time and even the medium and time is in their control. Mcquail, Blumler and Brown (1972) stated that that consumers deliberately use media to satisfy their needs of diversion and entertainment. So the new media has increased the choices for people. They are now more independent to access their favorite genre of music anytime and even new media has enabled musicians and singers to connect to the whole world and stir the music lovers with their talent. Alexomanolaki et al (2007) conducted several experiments and reported that presence of music in any video particularly in commercials in the form of jingles enhanced the impact of implicit learning and memorization of images and words. The authors claimed that conscious reference the music has strong implicit impacts on audiences. Randall and Rickard (2017) analyzed variations of personal music listening in terms of modern technology stating that modern technological advancement of digital and online media has increased user control and people now have unlimited options to enjoy implicit and explicit music listening on cell phones. So now listening to music has become flexible and portable style of entertainment. People are free to select any genre of music at any time. This can be considered as one of the most powerful sources for mood regulation and relaxation.

The researcher has taken the issue of “Music Listening in Pakistan”, considering the widely spread concern that music is not a favored item according to Islamic philosophy, the study aims at examining the interplay between the music liking and religiosity of Pakistani music consumers. This situation can be illustrated as.

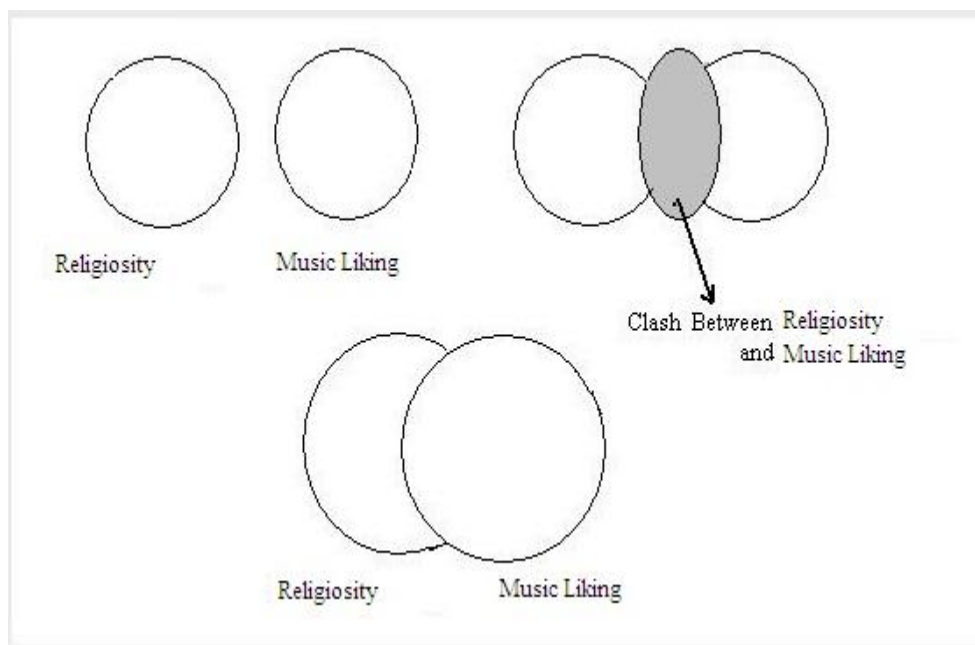


Figure 1.1 [ Interplay between religiosity and music liking (aesthetics) of Muslim Music Listeners]

The study aims at presenting the state of mind of present day Muslim music listeners in Pakistani society. It lies on the general impression about the status of music in Islam that presents music as a phenomenon that is not favored. On the other side, relatively; the growing rate of musical elements in the television radio channels of Pakistan along with huge consumption through social media proves popularity of music.

Likewise, discussing the preferences and cognitive choices of Muslim music listener, the status of music listening in Islam is an important area of study as status of music is considered strictly prohibited by some schools of thought and simultaneously declared as allowed by some other strands. (Asari, 2005; Bukhari, 2006; Joomal 2003)

On taking a deeper look, the Islamic standpoints towards music can be divided in three strands: Islamists, Liberal and Sufis.

1. By declaring music not acceptable, the followers of the first strand clearly condemn music. They focus on the interpretation of different verses of Holy Quran and quote Hadiths in support to their viewpoint (Ok & Erdal, 2015).

2. The liberals declare music as Halal and permissible and also quote doctrinal references in the support of their stance.
3. A strong tradition of religious Sufi music also exists in Pakistani society comprised on Samaa or Qawali. The Fuqaha or Ulema (Scholars) belonging to every standpoint present doctrinal references in support of their view. Hence, as a very strong form of media, music has a strong base in Pakistani society and serves as an important part of lifestyles of masses (Phulwari, 1997).

As music is considered a combination of instruments and voice, both the conservative and liberal strands present different standards about the form, nature and effect of music (Ok & Erdal, 2015; Otterbeck, 2008; Phulwari, 1997).

A study of Pew Research Foundation (2016) found as majority of Pakistani Muslims, along with people of Palestine, Jordan, Malaysia, and Senegal, voted that national laws or state laws should be made following by Quranic interpretations. The overriding Islamic discourse associated to music in Pakistani society proves music as not favored in Islam resulting in a clash between the beliefs and actions of individuals. On the other hand, music serves as one of the strongest form of media creating a huge impact on the lifestyles of people. This state involves listeners in a constant mental dilemma and accumulation of authentic religious knowledge can be helpful for them in doing away with this condition.

On taking a deeper look, in Pakistan, the Islamic standpoints towards music can be divided in three strands: Islamist, Liberal and Sufi thought. While the Islamists proclaim music as completely forbidden (Haram) the liberals declare music as Halal and permissible. A strong tradition of religious Sufi music also exists in Pakistani society comprised on Samaa or Qawali. Fuqaha or Ulema (Scholars) belonged to every standpoint present doctrinal references in support of their view but as an overriding concern, music is taken as a source of entertainment not favoured in Islam. Hence, as a very strong form of media, music has a strong base in Pakistani society and serves as important part of lifestyles of masses.

### **The Islamist Standpoint**

By declaring music forbidden or haram, the follower of the first strand clearly condemn music. They focus on the interpretation of different

verses of Holy Quran and quote hadiths also in support to their viewpoint (Phulwari, 1997).

The primary reference of conservative strand is from Surah-e-Luqman, ayat number six, and this also contains the "lahv al-hadith" word that is interpreted differently by the people of Islamist and the liberal stance.

On interpreting, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud Radhiyallahu'anhu referred the Arabic expression of "lahv al-hadith" in this ayah to singing "*ghina*" by repeating this three times. Later further researchers, ibn Abbas, Ja'far also, stated the same meaning to point toward singing and listening songs. (Bukhari, 2006; Joomal 2003)

Several Tabi'in also, like Mujahid, Ikramah, Makhoul, Umar ibn Shuayb, viewed it as sensual music, and briefly, fuqaha used those professed sayings of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, with substantial effect and forbade any kind of music. Another reference provided by this strand is in Surah al-Isra, ayah 64, some of the Tabi'in such as ad-Dahak and Mujahid assumed, "Satan's exciting mankind with his voice" which means satan does it through the use of music, song, and amusement. Ad-Dahak held that it was the sound of wind instrument.

The third ayah that this strand is used to quote is from Surah al-Najm, ayah 57. There are five ayahs, 57 to 62. According to an interpretation, Ibn Abbas radhi'Allah'anhu quotes that the Arabic word "*sam'i'down*," that means vanities in this verse denotes the habit of mushrikeen. As they sing and play music vociferously every time, they heard the Quran being recited by Muslims, so the others would not hear it properly (Asari, 2005; Bukhari, 2006).

Though all these views are based on interpretation of Quran, this is very important to mention, there is no single verse in Quran that clearly prohibits music. The follower of this strand also quotes many *Hadith* in support of their view, posing serious questions about the permissibility of music, and finally proving it as a forbidden thing.

### **The Liberal Standpoint**

On the contrary, the scholars who favor music claim that there is not a single verse in the Noble Quran on forbidding music. In fact, music and songs are acceptable in the Islam. They also put forward some references

from different verses and *Hadith* to support their stance (Asari, 2005; Bukhari, 2006; Joomal 2003).

As Surah Nisa, Verse 163, (4:163) says, "We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: we sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms", (Al-Quran, 4:63).

The Surah Bani Israel, Verse 55, (17:55) states: "And it is your Lord that knoweth best all beings that are in the heavens and on earth: We did bestow on some prophets more (and other) gifts than on others: and We gave to David (the gift of) the Psalms", (Al-Quran, 17:55).

Another evidence is quoted in the context when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) touched the holy land of the Holy City of Madina, the Muslims played music and also sang the famous Islamic song "*Talaa El-Badru Alayna*" which means "The full moon had come upon us" (Phulwari, 1997).

Scholars from liberal standpoint also quote *hadith* from Sahih Al Bukhari Volume 2, Book 15, Number 70 to support their standpoint. The *hadith* states that the holy prophet (PBUH) instructed two girls to continue their singing of old war songs when they were stopped by Abu Bakr Sadiq R.A) This same *hadith* is stated again in Sahih Muslim, book 004, Number 1942 and Sahih Bukhari Volume 5, Book 58, Number 268.

In Sahih Bukhari, Volume 6, Book 61, Number 568, Abu Musa narrated that, "the Prophet said to him 'O Abu Musa! You have been given **one of the musical wind-instruments** from the family of David" Another evidence provided by the followers of this strand is from Muslim Book 004, Number 0735 which is reported by Ibn Umar in the presence of Holy Prophet (PBUH), as to know the time of prayer. Sahaba at that time suggested the usage of bell like Christian's use, and horn like Jews use as their call for prayer.

The supporters of liberal strand also emphasize that creating innovations and interpreting the things those are not proved like "music prohibition" is "*biddah*", they also quote Surah Aa, raaf, verse 32, Surah Yunus, Verse 59 to support their view.

On giving a different stance, Phulwari (1997) quotes that there are even references in the Holy Quran about music but music is permissible in the light of those references, he quotes evidence from Surah Al Ruumn verse 15 that has an Arabic expression as “*Yuhbaroon*”, derived from “*Hibratun*” . Arabic grammarians and researchers Zajaj, Sheikh Al Labnani interpret “*Hibratun*” as “Melodious song”.

### **The Sufi Standpoint**

In subcontinent, Sama or Qawali has been a strong form of religious music. Contrary to the debate of permissibility of music, the tradition has its strong roots. Muslim mystics or Sufis have been firm advocates over the legitimacy of music, They consider music as spiritual principal, not only a *halal* (permissible) thing but a *wajib* (required) religious practice (Otterbeck, 2008 ; Beeman, 2011). It was the Sufis with their *samd'* ceremonies who turn out to be the leading custodians of Islamic Music. They were the patrons of Islamic music throughout in their time of history. They firmly supported the Islamic Music in the time when Puritanism subjected the social fabric of Muslim society and when they dejected the cultivation of music. From its very initial stages, Persian and Turkish classical music has been linked with the *Samd'* ceremony; both the poets and the musicians were often from a Sufi background.

In Pakistan, a very strong tradition of Sufi music also exists. Though some segments of conservatives challenge the permissibility of Sufi music also by considering it a blend of lyrics and instruments, a common practice of *Sama* is present on religious festivals, shrines and religious occasions celebrated by masses. The religious music in Pakistan is also present in the form of non-instrumental *Naats*, *Nasheeds* , *Marthiyas* and *Nohas*. Sometimes followed by *daf* or pat voices(instruments), such items are produced in a more rhythmic and melodious manner (Bukhari, 2006). Since music is considered a combination of instruments and voice, both the Islamist and liberal strands present different standards about the form, nature and effect of music. According to the Islamists, music containing forbidden lyrics and instruments i.e. violin, flute, piano or containing instruments with religious lyrics i.e. Qawali or containing permitted instruments but forbidden lyrics i.e. hip hop and rap music is not



permissible. So, only one form of music that has permitted lyrics and instruments is allowed. (Otterbeck, 2008)

However, a diversion of liberal strand asserts that due to the legacy and respect associated with Quranic verses, singing them with musical instruments seems inappropriate. However, certain forms of music can be allowed depending on nature and structure. It includes 1. *Manqabat and Sama*, 2 The praise of God ( *hamad*), or praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) *Naat* , *Nasheed*,3 *Rajaz* , national anthems and inspiring songs towards armed forces,4 *Hudi khwani* ( Songs to motivate animals)5, Poetic expression with melody to create soft feelings along with child rhymes and music intended to relax patients. (Beeman, 2011; Phulwari, 1997, p - 44)

The situation presents a mixed condition about status of music in Pakistan where all religious Muslim strands have their own standpoints with the support of doctrinal texts. Despite that status, as an overriding concern the majority of Pakistani Muslims generally considers music as not permitted or allowed in Islam leading to a situation of illusion or unidentified ideas. At the same time, a consumer youth oriented culture which is borrowed from the global cultural flow alter the local condition. Newly oriented styles having modern consuming patterns of music, advanced technological devices and a new use and distribution of music through social media, creates a challenging public sphere of huge music consumption. According to PEMRA, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, there is a growing rate of musical elements in the television channels of Pakistan along with many national TV channels completely dedicated to 24 hours music transmission, many FM radio stations nationwide with whole day musical contents with AM radio stations partly disseminating musical transmission.

### **Methodology**

The research study is intended to measure the interplay between aesthetics (Liking towards Music) and Religiosity of Muslim music listeners. The researcher has taken the issue of “Music Listening in Pakistan”, considering the widely spread concern that Music is not a favored item according to Islamic philosophy, the study aims at

examining the interplay between music liking and religiosity of present-day Pakistani music listeners.

### **Experimental Method:**

Mainly, derived from physical sciences, as research method for social sciences experiments are conducted having a defined "treatment" which is introduced into the research context or manipulated by the researcher to measure its effects on the respondents

1. The research study is designed by following the rules of quasi experimental design. Henrichsen, Smith & Baker (1997) say that quasi-experimental designs are usually constructions that already exist in the real world. Those designs that fall into the quasi-experimental category fall short in some way of the criteria for the true experimental group.

### **Population**

All major and recognized colleges and universities of Lahore city, which offer courses at undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate levels, form the population for the study.

### **Sample:**

For this research study probability sampling techniques were utilized. Firstly, the researcher selected four colleges and universities of Lahore including Government College University, GCU, University of the Punjab, Department of Philosophy, Kinnaired College for Women University, KCU and Lahore College for Women University, LCU. At the second stage, researcher allotted a quota of 25 from each community to make a sample of 100 respondents. At the third stage, 100 respondents were randomly selected through lottery method. Thus, a sample of 100 respondents drawn from the population participated in the experiment.

### **Control Variables:**

**Religion:** Islam

**Nationality:** Pakistani

**Age:** 18-26 Years

**Sex:** Male and Females both

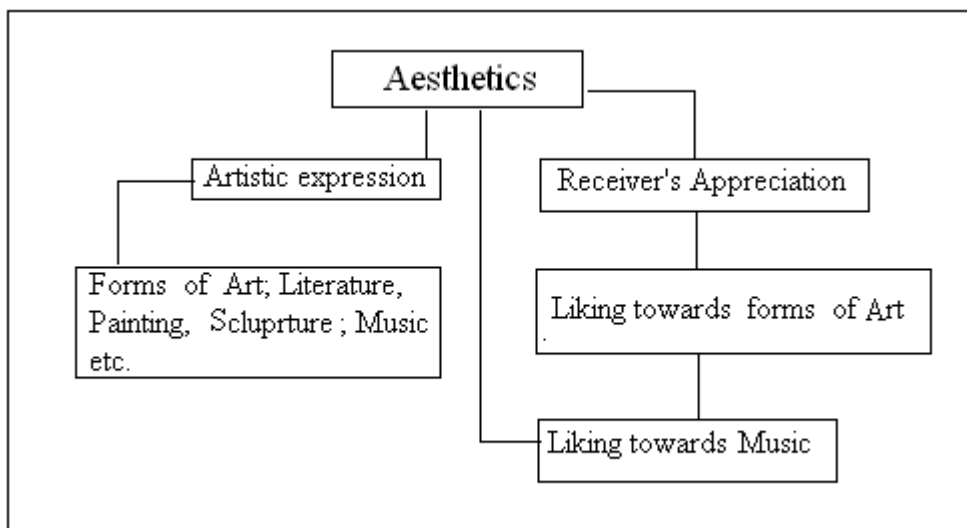
**Education:** Undergraduates, Graduates and Postgraduates

### Independent Variable:

Henrichsen, Smith & Baker (1997) state that independent variable is that the researcher has control over. This "control" may involve manipulating existing variables (e.g., modifying existing methods of instruction) or introducing new in the research setting. Whatever the case may be, the researcher expects that the independent variable(s) will have some effect on (or relationship with) the dependent variables. For the present study "Religiosity" is taken as Independent variable.

### Variable 1:

For the present study "Music Liking" narrowed down from "Aesthetics" is taken as first variable.



[Liking towards Music as a sub-branch of Aesthetics; derived from Eaton (1988)]

### Music Liking

According to Musicologist Nattiez (1990), the border between music and noise is always culturally defined. The description states music as a matter of aesthetic perception of a sound. It is the aesthetic appreciation from a human mind that gives a sound the status of a melodious tune. However the very definition of music can be stated as "Composition of melodious sounds to create an impression on

human mind". The term "liking" can be defined as "to enjoy", "Appreciate", "Admire" and "an attitude more likely to adaptation".

### **Stimulus Materials (Song)**

The stimulus material is comprised of a popular song, the criterion of popularity involves broadcasting from at least 4 major radio stations and 2 major television stations in a week<sup>1</sup>. On the basis of this criterion a famous song "Jia Dharrak Dharrak Jaey" by "Rahat Ali Khan" is being selected.

### **Components of Experiment:**

#### **a. Pretest (Pre-Experimental Questionnaire)**

The pre experimental questionnaire consists of twenty questions is being designed to gather three types of information:

- Respondent's demographic information
- Respondent's views about Religiosity in general
- Respondent's affiliation to their Religion Islam,

### **I Scale**

For the pre test requirements Likert scale was employed across 5 points in the pre test questionnaire. (Dominick, 2003; Sarantakos, 1998; Neuman, 2001)

### **II Procedure:**

To measure the level of religiosity in respondents the taken sample is asked to fill the pre experimental questionnaire, the respondents are then exposed to the stimulus material as they made to listen the song. Their reactions are then measured through post experimental questionnaire (based on second variable i.e. (music liking).

### **III Posttest (Post-Experimental Questionnaire)**

The post experimental questionnaire is designed to measure the effects of stimulus material on the aesthetics (Music Liking) of the taken sample. Consisted of 20 questions the post experimental questionnaire gathered information about:

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of selecting a popular song, 4 major FM radio channels i.e. FM 101, FM 100, FM 91 and Fm103 are being listened and two major TV channels Geo entertainment and PTV 1 are watched in the prime time through out a week i.e. 10-18 February 2007.

- The respondent's reaction towards the stimulus material
- The respondent's knowledge regarding status of music in their Religion

#### **IV Scaling:**

In order to measure the effects of stimulus material on the music liking of taken sample, the post experimental questionnaire is designed by applying Likert Scale across 5 points (Dominick, 2003; Sarantakos, 1998).

#### **Discussion and Analysis**

The research study, in the light of its research question has tried to investigate the relationship between the two variables; Religiosity and music liking, the findings indicate a situation mixed with different concerns. The adopted research questions are as:

#### **2. To what extent Muslim music listeners are inclined towards music;**

On asking from the taken sample, 72% respondents responded strongly agreed, about preferring music on other entertainment sources, 65% respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 2% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. After the treatment in the post experimental questionnaire, regarding the song that they listened to, 73 % of the respondents strongly agreed that this was an entertaining song, while; only 1% strongly disagreed, participants' response to the statement that the tune of the song was impressive, 66 % respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 4% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree.

#### **3. To what extent Muslim Music listeners have knowledge about the status of Music in Islam as Halal or Haram phenomenon;**

Regarding respondent's rating about their knowledge about Islam, 41% respondents responded as strongly agree as they felt that they have sufficient knowledge about Islam, whereas 7% respondents

showed their reaction as strongly disagree. About acquiring knowledge regarding religious matters, 43% respondents strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 3% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. Regarding the status of music in Islam as Haram, 9% respondents responded as strongly agree, 5% respondents agreed, 68% respondents were undecided, 5% responded as disagree, whereas 13% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. About whether their knowledge about status of music in Islam based upon the information provided by your elders, 66% respondents responded as strongly agree, 17% respondents agree, 9% respondents were undecided, 6% responded as disagree, whereas 2% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree.

On giving reaction to the song that they listened to, 73 % of the respondents strongly agreed that this was an entertaining song, only 1% strongly disagreed. About musical instruments being used in the song suited the lyrics, 67% respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 4% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree.

The respondent's reaction whether they understood all the words of the lyrics while listening, 52% respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 8% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. The respondent's view regarding harmony in singer's voice and musical instruments used in the song, 73% respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 5% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. The responding to the question is there any routine at your home to listen to music; 54% respondents responded as strongly agree, 18% respondents agree, 18% respondents undecided, 3% responded as disagree, whereas 7% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. Regarding music is a bad thing, 14% respondents responded as strongly agree, whereas 32% respondents showed their reaction as strongly disagree. Regarding the extent to which music is allowed in Islam, 4% respondents responded as to a great extent music is allowed, 9%

respondents agreed to a standard extent, 74% respondents were undecided, 8% of the respondents regarded music as not allowed in Islam, whereas 6% respondents showed their reaction as absolutely not allowed. About their wish to get knowledge about the status of music listening in Islam, only 5% responded as strongly agree, 67% responded as disagree.

### Results (Hypothesis Testing)

#### **H1:**

In Muslim music listeners, high Religiosity is associated with high music liking.

#### **H0:**

In Muslim music listeners, high Religiosity is not associated with high music liking.

### Statistical Measurement

Pearson Correlation		Religiosity	Music Liking
		1	.259(**)
Religious Learning	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (1-tailed) N		.005
Liking towards Music	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (1-tailed) N	100	100
		.259(**)	1
		.005	
			100
		100	

### Interpretation

The relationship between religious learning and liking towards music was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. Preliminary

analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation found between the two variables = .259, n= 100, p <0.01, high levels of religiosity associated with higher levels of music liking.

### Conclusion

By following the rules of quasi experimental design the behavior of the taken sample (n =100) is measured before and after treatment, the treatment was based upon the stimulus material of a popular song to determine the level of music liking in the taken sample. The results indicated that there is a positive correlation on applying Pearson correlation coefficient one tailed test through using SPSS. On the basis of the findings the researcher asserted that the taken hypothesis was proven as there is a strong indication exists of music liking and following the religion at a same time. The taken sample is found more inclined towards music as well.

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