TRAUMA OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION, PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT, POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH AND MENTAL HEALTH IN RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

MUHAMMAD AQIB

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science (Clinical Psychology)

Supervisor: Dr. Khawer Bilal Baig

Department of Professional Psychology

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY LAHORE CAMPUS

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Approval for Examination

Scholar's Name: Muhammad Aqib

Registration No.: 03-275232-031

Program of Study: Master's in clinical psychology

Thesis Title: Trauma of religious discrimination, perceived social support, posttraumatic growth and mental health in religious minorities

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Dedication

Alhamdulillah, all praise is due to Allah (SWT), the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, for granting me the strength, patience, and guidance to complete this work. I dedicate this thesis to my mother, whose values, love, and prayers continue to guide me. To my beloved Father whose sacrifices, unwavering support, and endless encouragement have been the foundation of my journey, and to my friends especially Mir and Faisal, who have stood by me with care, motivation, and understanding this accomplishment is as much theirs as it is mine. Finally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my respected supervisor, Dr. Khawer Bilal Baig whose guidance, patience, and invaluable insights have been instrumental in bringing this research to completion.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationships among religious discrimination, perceived social support, posttraumatic growth (PTG), and mental health in religious minorities in Pakistan. A purposive sample of 203 participants (Christians = 135; Ahmadis = 68) completed validated self-report measures, including the Religious Discrimination Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Mental Health Continuum-Short Form, and Posttraumatic Growth Inventory. Results indicated that religious discrimination was significantly and negatively associated with both mental health ($r = –.442$, $p < .01$) and PTG ($r = –.432$, $p < .01$). The perceived social support was significantly associated with mental health ($r = .707$, $p < .01$) and PTG ($r = .486$, $p < .01$). Results of moderation analyses indicated that the negative impact of religious discrimination on both outcomes was mitigated by perceived social support with significant interaction effects in both mental health ($B = .119$, $p = .002$) and PTG ($B = .171$, $p = .014$). Group comparisons indicated that Ahmadis did report more discrimination, but that Christians did report more PTG and good mental health in controlling support. These results emphasize the harmful effects of systemic religious discrimination on mental health and the protective role of social support. The research will add to the body of knowledge in the minority stress theory as it evidences a new culture that has not been explored sufficiently in literature, as well as pointing out possible practical interventions by community and psychosocial support groups, and policy changes that may ensure the protection of the rights of the minorities in the Pakistani context.

Keywords: religious discrimination, posttraumatic growth, mental health, perceived social support, religious minorities, Pakistan

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List of Symbols

Symbol	Full Form
α	Alpha Cronbach's Index
β	Standardized Coefficient
f	Frequency
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
%	Percentage
r	Correlation Coefficient

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full Form
APA	American Psychiatric Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
RDST	Religious Discrimination
PTG	Posttraumatic Growth
PSS	Perceived Social Support
PTSD	Post traumatic stress Disorder
MH	Mental Health

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