

## The effect of workshop training and instructional packages on students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in 2015

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### Abstract:

**Background and Purpose of Study:** All throughout history, worship and prayers have been the basis of influential religions in human life. Today, due to technological advancements in human communities, lack of morality is felt more than ever before. Therefore, enhancing the spirits for prayers seems to be undeniably essential. The females in addition to the role of social, have a key role in religious studies of their children . The present research aimed to determine the effect of workshop training and instructional packages on students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in 2015.

**Methodology:** This research was conducted in a pre- and post-test on university students of Hormozgan province in 2015. The estimated sample size was 300. However, overall 100 subjects participated in this study. The data gathering instrument was a standardized questionnaire on attitude and adherence to prayers. This questionnaire was submitted to students in two phases, once before and once again after the intervention. The criteria of the inclusion was the absolute satisfaction of students in completing questionnaires before and after the workshops and participating in all workshops held during the study. The first intervention was to distribute cultural packages among the subjects. Workshops were held weekly in two sessions, totally 24 sessions, during three months. Descriptive and analytic statistics were used to analyze the data (paired-sample t-test, Pearson byproduct correlation coefficient) in SPSS, v-21.

**Findings:** According to the results obtained from 100 participants, the mean score of adherence to prayers in the pre-test of medical university students was 55.15±19.29; it was 51.65±19.73 in Azad university, and 49.85±21.11 among other universities (Elmi-Karbordi, Farhangian, PNU, Fatemieh, etc.). The same score in the post-test was reported as 91.96±20.65, 16±22.77 and 85.16±20.90 in the afore-mentioned universities, respectively. The attitude and adherence to prayers before the introduction of instructional packages to students was 48% (poor) and 52% (moderate) which changed to 2% (poor) and 74% (moderate) and 24% (good) after the intervention. The results were indicative of the positive influence of instruction and instructional packages on university students' attitude towards prayers ( $p < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Holding workshops and distributing packages among university students managed to affect their attitude towards prayers. Therefore, it is suggested to continuously hold workshops and benefit from experienced professors in this realm so as to promote students' adherence to prayers from good to very high.

**Key terms:** cultural instructional packages, prayers, effect of instruction.

## Introduction:

Worship exists as a fact among all creatures and there is no single creature in the whole world not worshipping God. This very fact which has partly emerged through revelations is stated in the 44th<sup>1</sup> of Surah Al-Isra: "The seven heavens and the Earth and all the things therein are chanting hymns of His glory along with His praise but you do not understand their hymns. The fact is that He is very Forbearing and Forgiving".

A close look into the Quran verses tells us that not only is the whole created world is praising God, but there is no single creature not receiving God's light. God has embedded secrets of creation within worship as stated in the 56th<sup>2</sup> verse of Surah Al-Zariat: "I have not created mankind and jinn except to worship Me". Throughout human history, worship and prayers have always been the basis of religions strongly affecting human life, though in different shapes and methods as in differing societies (1, 2). Instruction is the most effective way for changing one's attitude in case its aim is to raise awareness (2). Therefore instructing on prayers should aim to develop the audience's logical beliefs so as to establish its concept as a key religious task and not as an imposed regular habit (3). Previous studies showed that religious education, books and religious publications are from important factors that have been absorbed religious programs (4-6). The issue of active learning in Iran was review and conducted partly in the official curriculum on a variety of

topics, but in the field of cultural and educational issues especially prayer is not regarded as worthy (7).

The correlation of mental health and religious attitude has been proved in a body of research and prayers has been considered as an essential key to gaining mental health. Several verses and quotations attest to this fact (1, 2, 8). Today, due to technological progress in human societies, there is a further lack of morality. Therefore, the roots of prayers culture need to be strengthened. The females in addition to the role of social, have a key role in religious studies of their children. Due to the effect of prayers on mental health as well as the effect of instruction on people's tendency, there is a need for programs which provoke thought over prayers among the youth (9).

To develop new cultures, there exists a pattern called the development of innovation which is defined as: the passage of a concept through certain ducts within certain time and getting established among people. As maintained by Rogers and Shoemaker, these patterns are used best to persuade people. This pattern can be used to reframe prayers in a new way so as gradual steps are taken to persuade the audience (2). This research was conducted to investigate the effect of workshop training and instructional packages on students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in 2015

<sup>1</sup> تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا

يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ<sup>2</sup>

## Methodology:

This research was conducted in a pre-test, post-test procedure on university students of Hormozgan province in 2015. Student participants were female those studying in Bandar Abbas universities. Initially, This research was conducted in a pre- and post-test on university students of Hormozgan province in 2015. The estimated sample size was 300. However, overall 100 subjects participated in this study. At the outset of the study, participants filled out a standardized questionnaire of attitude and practical adherence to prayers developed by Anisi et al. (2008) (1). In this research, 6 variables were investigated including age, education level, degree of attention to the recommended, degree of wholehearted attention to prayers. To gather the data, a demographic information questionnaire was used along with a standardized questionnaire investigating attitude and practical adherence to prayers using Cronbach's alpha. This questionnaire is comprised of 50 items each rated on a 5-level likert scale (Always to never, or completely agree to completely disagree and rarely). Zero score was rated for 'never'. 1 was rated for 'very little'. 2 was rated for 'sometimes' and 3 was rated for 'often'. 4 was rated for 'always'. The demographic information was included at the beginning of the test and the items of the questionnaire inquired 4 main factors: effectiveness of prayers in one's individual and social life, attention and adherence to the recommended, serious attempts to say one's prayers and wholehearted attention while saying prayers.

Participants' contact number and email were obtained in order to make further contacts. Finally, the first intervention was to distribute cultural

packages among the subjects. The package consisted of a book and CD on prayers and adherence to it along with such items as Salavat-counter and a booklet of well-known lecturers' preaching. The package aimed to teach the basics of prayers and create an emotional link. Relevant workshops and panel discussions were held to talk about God, anthropology, prayers and related rules. Use was made of celebrities of the field as well as professors and graduate students whose projects were relevant to this topic. Workshops were held weekly in two sessions, totally 24 sessions, during three months. Within three months of instruction, the same questionnaire was once again submitted to all participants to evaluate the effect of the instructional intervention. All the data were kept confidential and were used for the research purposes only. SPSS v.21 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (frequency, median and mean), paired sample t-test and Pearson byproduct correlation coefficient were used to analyze the data.

## Findings:

According to the results obtained, 69% of the participants who entered the study belonged to 18-22 and 23-40 age groups. Ten percent (10%) of the whole participants were studying for associate degree; 84% for Bachelor degree, and 6% for Master degree 32% of the whole subjects studied at the University of Medical Sciences; 26% at Azad University, and the remaining 42% studied at other universities (Fatemieh, Elmi-Karbordi, Farhangian and PNU). As the obtained results revealed, the mean score of practical adherence to prayers in the pre-test was  $54.02 \pm 20.01$  and  $47.54 \pm 19.94$  in the 18-

22 and 23-40 age groups respectively. The same score changed to  $90.76 \pm 19.15$  and  $83.8 \pm 23.03$  in the post-test, after the instructional intervention. The highest mean was observed in the 18-22 age group. The mean score of students' practical adherence to prayers in the three educational levels is demonstrated in table 1.

**Table 1:** Students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in terms of the education level

Education level	frequency	Mean score in pre-test	Mean score in post-test
Associate degree	10%	$70.0 \pm 24.27$ 57	$75.0 \pm 30.96$ 87
B.A.	84%	$78.2 \pm 20.16$ 51	$76.7 \pm 20.18$ 88
M.A.	6%	$75.0 \pm 10.76$ 46	$75.0 \pm 16.23$ 89

The above-mentioned findings indicated that the highest mean score belonged respectively to M.A., B.A. and associate levels. According to the results, there was a significant difference between the effect of the instructional packages on students' attitude and adherence to prayers ( $p < .05$ ).

In the pre-test, subjects' attitude towards prayers in the University of Medical Sciences was  $55.15 \pm 19.29$ ; in Azad University it was  $51.65 \pm 19.73$  and in other universities it was  $49.85 \pm 21.11$ . In the post-test these mean scores respectively changed to  $91.96 \pm 20.65$ ,  $90 \pm 22.77$  and  $85.19 \pm 20.16$ . University of Medical Sciences, Azad University and other universities respectively achieved the highest scores. From among the university students, 56% were not dorm residents while 43% resided in the dormitory. As the result of the intervention, the mean scores of the dorm residents and non-residents in the pre-test were respectively  $51.4 \pm 20.84$  and  $52.5 \pm 19.7$ . In the post-test the same scores were respectively  $90.7 \pm 18.94$  and  $86.96 \pm 26.55$ . This finding attests to

the effect of the place of residence on people's attitude and adherence to prayers.

In terms of mother's education, 60% of subjects' mothers were uneducated or had elementary school education; 30% had junior high school degree or diploma and 10% had an associate degree or university degree.

**Table 1:** Students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in terms of mother's education before and after the intervention education

Mother's education	Frequency	Mean score in pre-test	Mean score in post-test
Uneducated/elementary school	60%	$7 \pm 21/60$ 51/0	$3 \pm 23/39$ 88/1
Junior high school/diploma	30%	$2 \pm 18/57$ 54/3	$3 \pm 17/57$ 90/3
Associate degree or higher	10%	$3 \pm 15/47$ 47/0	$2 \pm 16/04$ 85/0

According to table 3, mother's education significantly affected one's adherence to prayers, and a significant divergence was observed between the groups ( $p < .05$ ).

In terms of father's education, 48% of subjects' fathers were uneducated; 33% had a junior high school degree, and 19% had an associated degree or higher. According to table 3, evidence has it that father's education affects students' attitude and adherence to prayers.

**Table 2:** Students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities in terms of father's education

Father's education	Frequency	Mean score in pre-test	Mean score in post-test
Uneducated/elementary school	48%	5±21/81 56/1	7±23/97 88/7
Junior high school/diploma	33%	3±17/20 47/3	9±17/65 88/6
Associate degree or higher	19%	7±18/76 48/8	5±19/36 87/7

In the pre-test phase, 48% of the participants had a low attitude towards prayers and 52% had a moderate attitude towards the topic. In the post-test, participants' attitude towards prayers was 2% (low/poor), 74% (moderate) and 24% (good). Overall, the mean score before the distribution of instructional packages and discussion sessions was  $52.02 \pm 20.11$ . After the intervention, the same score turned into  $86.61 \pm 21.02$ . Paired sample t-test attested to the effect of instruction and distribution of instructional packages on students' adherence to prayers.

### Discussion:

The present research aimed to test effect of workshop training and instructional packages on students' attitude and practical adherence to prayers in female students of Bandar Abbas universities,

Because the females in addition to the role of social, have a key role in religious studies of their children so they were examined in this study.

The results indicated the positive effect of instructional packages and workshops on university students' attitude and adherence to prayers. The present findings were consistent with those of similar investigations (10-19). In a study conducted by Askari, aiming to investigate school students' attitude towards prayers and finding ways to attract them, students' attitude was found to be positive (20). Sadni, Jahanian and Sabilan considered religious instructions and availability of religious publications effective in attracting students and involving them in religious ceremonies (4-6). With this regard, Ghavifekr maintained that instruction methods are strongly influencing the extent to which students are motivated to and interested in religious matters (21).

The present research observed the effect of the place of residence on people's attitude and adherence to prayers. The results indicated that students' adherence to prayers significantly raised among dorm residents after the intervention as compared to non-residents of dorms. Studies conducted by Nasirzadeh, Wicox, and Danelson were indicative of dorm residents' positive attitude towards prayers (9,18,19). These findings show that separation from family and living on your own in a dorm does not necessarily lead to the fading of one's religious beliefs. Living with other religious students and participation in religious activities help to develop more interest in moral values.

A comparison of students' adherence to prayers in terms of their parents' education level revealed the effect of the latter on students' adherence to prayers. This finding was consistent with Rokni and Bahripour's study (22, 23). Taleban pinpointed that parents' education (below diploma) affected students' tendency towards prayers (10). The results obtained from a body of research conducted by Sabilan, Sadeghi, Gilak and Zoroufi, Keshavarz and Jahangiri showed no significant correlation between prayers and parents' higher education (20, 24-26), so to each level the education of parents are more, they can introduce religious studies better and with spending time and raise awareness of their children, they make them to pray more.

The results of the present research revealed that age (18-22) also affected students' adherence to prayers. In Hallami and Agail's perspective, age showed to affect one's religious stance (27). In another research, a positive correlation was observed between students' age and public prayers (28). One reason might be that the spirit of people at younger ages is ready to accept more wisdom, because of lack of preoccupation and influence is more at early ages

. According to the findings of this research, the university type also affects students' adherence to prayers. Students affiliated with the state university were found to have a higher adherence and attitude. Those affiliated with Azad University ranked second with this regard and those affiliated with other universities (Fatemeh, Elmi-Karbordi, Farhangian and PNU) stood next. Therefore, the type of

university significantly affected one's adherence to prayers (25, 28, 30).

The results showed that education intervention has more influence in people who have younger age and parents with higher education or who live in dormitory, they tend to worship more than others. So for better intervention efficiency target groups can be investigated.

A number of suggestions are made to strengthen the spirit of submission to God:

1. Holding continuous discussion panels over belief systems
2. Holding extracurricular courses and conducting research
3. University staff's attendance at prayers' ceremony
4. Presence of logical and attractive clergymen in university dorms for student consultation

### Conclusion:

Holding workshops and distributing cultural and instructional packages affected university students' attitude to prayers. Therefore, it is suggested to hold such workshops continuously and use experienced professors in this realm so as to promote students' adherence to prayers from good to very high level.

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