

**Attitude Towards Women Amongst A Sample
of South African Muslim
Males**

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate age, education and level of religiosity as correlates of attitudes toward women amongst a sample of South African Muslim men. The study was conducted with 118 randomly selected South African Muslim males. A biographical questionnaire, the Islamic Attitude Toward Women Scale (Khalid, 2004) and the Religiosity Measures Questionnaire developed by Rohrbaugh & Jessor in 1975 (Hill & Hood, 1999) were used to collect data. The findings revealed that age was significantly related to attitudes towards women. Education and level of religiosity were found to have no significant relationship with attitude towards women.

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DECLARATION

I, **Rizwana Ahmed** (Student Number: 951037580), hereby declare that the contents of this study represents the author's own research and writing, and that no source material has been falsely used or unacknowledged.



Rizwana Ahmed

Date : 03/09/08

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The question of women's status has acquired great importance amongst all communities throughout the world. Current international focus on Islam has highlighted the position and role of Muslim women within what is often perceived to be a misogynistic, male chauvinistic religion. South African Muslims live in a country with one of the most progressive constitutions in the world; one that promotes and protects women's rights and gender equality.

According to Engineer (1992), for thousands of years many societies were patriarchal. It was the norm for women to be considered inferior to men and therefore to submit to male authority in order to maintain the status quo. However, in recent times, there has been a new consciousness of rights for women in the Western world. Women have taken a stand and refuse to be treated as the property of men. They no longer want to be subjugated to men as they were in patriarchal societies. There has been a similar but less vociferous movement in the Islamic world regarding the position of women in Islam.

Religion plays an important role in determining an individual's identity i.e. one's social consciousness as well as the traditions to which one adheres (Engineer, 1992). Everything is seen through the mirror of religion, including how one determines women's rights in society. Islam is a religion that has discussed in detail women's rights both in the *Quran* and in the formulations of *Shariah* (Islamic law). According to Shaukat-Ali (1975), no other religious doctrine has awarded more rights and better status to women in the

organization of human affairs than Islam. These rights pertain to marriage, divorce, property, inheritance, custody of children, evidence, rewards and punishments.

This ideal, however, did not last long according to Shaukat-Ali (1975). The Islamic society began to be feudalist within a quarter of a century after the death of the prophet, Muhammad. Due to numerous sociological and political reasons, women were deprived of most of the rights and privileges that were conferred upon them in the *Quran* (Shaukat-Ali, 1975). Religious scriptures were influenced by the patriarchal societies. Hence, they were interpreted in a way that reflected the prevailing attitudes during that particular time period (Engineer, 1992). Islam, therefore, acquired a reputation of becoming extremely retrogressive in its treatment of women.

According to Engineer (1992), sociological influences have to be taken into account when interpreting a divine scripture i.e. interpretations of the *Quran* must be seen from the sociological perspective of the time in which it was interpreted. Often, interpreters violate the fundamentals of the *Quran* to suit their own ends. Therefore, even in modern times, interpretations are based on a time when women were looked upon as being inferior and their sole purpose was to bring up children and provide pleasure for their husbands (Engineer, 1992).

Nazira Zin al-Din is considered to be the most knowledgeable of women interpreters of the *Quran* to date (Afkhani, 1995). She studied the *Quran* and *Hadith* (things that the Prophet is known to have said or done) in great detail and arrived at her own conclusions about the position of women in Islam. She concluded that Islam was not the main reason

behind the inferior status of women, but that this could be blamed on a gender-biased interpretation of the *Quran* by men of religion. Zin al-Din argued that Islam is a religion that is based on freedom of will, thought, speech, and action, and that no Muslim is superior to another in matters of religion, mind, and will (Afkhani, 1995).

According to Ask and Tjomsland (1998), religion has often been used as a 'weapon' against women i.e. as a means of oppressing women. Women have often had to endure being subservient to men due to the influence of interpretations of holy texts such as the Bible and the *Quran*. Differences in interpretation of holy texts depend on the interpreters' own distinctive biography which will influence the reading of the text. There are very few women interpreters in the history of Islam and their views have not been allowed to influence Islamic legislation. Therefore, most interpretations of holy texts have been influenced by men who view women's rights as being contradictory to Islam (Afkhani, 1995).

Similarly, how does one ensure that contemporary views are not influenced by our own situation today? Perhaps modernists are interpreting the *Quran* in a way that argues and goes against divine law and therefore violates Islamic principles. Engineer (1992) is of the opinion that one selects verses from the *Quran* according to one's bias and then tries to prove one's point of view. No interpretation, however honest, can be free from such influences.

It is clear that there is a fine line between biased interpretations and true opinion i.e. the true message of the *Quran*. Supportive religious literature is often used as a way of defending one's position regarding the controversy of the status of women in Islam, be it liberal or conservative. Therefore, both arguments are equally valid and neither can be dismissed.

According to Utas (1988) and Khalid (2004), the conservative group promotes the marginalization of women, and frowns on their independence from the home. They believe that women should be seen as occupying a position of subjugation and therefore should remain under the domination of men. Women should have no influence on the wider workings of their society and should be kept out of sight and in confinement within the protective walls of their homes.

Conservatives quote various *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) in support of their view. These *Hadith* suggest that women should remain behind the four walls of their houses and not wander about displaying their beauty and finery. The *Quran* suggests that the wives of the Prophet, when speaking to other men, should do so from behind a partition. Therefore, conservatives believe that the rule of seclusion should apply to all women (Khalid, 2004). This injunction emphasizes that the home should form the centre of a woman's interest and activity and that there should be no unnecessary intermingling of the sexes in daily life (Siddiqi, 1988).

The *Quran* requires a reasonable degree of submission from women towards their husbands who are expected to maintain them and spend their wealth on them.

Conservatives have emphasized that women should submit to their husbands by referring to an example from the *Hadith* which says that, had prostration not been prohibited except to *Allah* (God), the Prophet would have ordered women to prostrate to their husbands. Another common *Hadith* referred to in this respect, is the saying that a woman will not enter paradise if her husband is not pleased with her (Engineer, 1992).

Conservatives have further elaborated that women should be seen as inferior to men by referring to *Hadith* which states that a woman's share of inheritance is less than that of the male heir. Various examples are also referred to from the *Hadith* which show that two women are needed as witnesses whereas only one man's word would suffice to bear witness (Engineer, 1992).

Liberals on the other hand, argue that Islam has in fact liberated women. They accept the egalitarian opinion of women and encourage their emancipation in Islamic societies (Haddad & Esposito, 1998). According to Shaukat-Ali (1975), Islam places men and women on a footing of equality; she cites various examples from religious literature to support her view. For example, a complete and separate chapter (*Sura*) in the *Quran* is devoted to women. Apart from spiritual life, in material matters too, there is no disparity between men and women according to Islamic law and both sexes should be seen as complementary to each other 'the women are your (men's) garments and ye (men) are their (women's) garments' (Shaukat-Ali, 1975).

According to Bux (2004), the general belief currently among Muslim men is that Muslim women are not encouraged to receive an education. However, she states that this premise is contradictory to Islamic teachings as *Hadith* encourages both men and women to seek knowledge. In fact, one of the most reliable sources of *Hadith* narration was a woman, i.e. A'isha, the Prophet Muhammad's wife. According to Bux (2004), historical records of the early days of Islam show that there were many learned women. Therefore, it is evident that women were educated and not kept illiterate and ignorant, but rather were encouraged to participate in the process of learning.

During the time of the Prophet, Muslim women played a significant role in the public life of the community. Their opinions and suggestions were encouraged and considered valuable in political affairs. Women also participated in wars and fought shoulder to shoulder with men. This shows that Muslim women were given maximum liberty and freedom to take an active part in nation-building activities (Shaukat-Ali, 1975).

If women were granted all these privileges in community life, then where is the basis of seclusion and *pardah* (veiling) as it prevails in most parts of the Islamic world today? According to Shaukat-Ali (1975), *pardah* is not of Islamic origin. The *Quran* merely restricts women from displaying their charm and beauty which would make her the center of attention. A woman is to appear with decency and dignity and is obliged to guard her modesty and chastity. Hence, women should be dressed with loose over-garments which hide their bodily features and charms. There is no sound evidence to suggest that Islam prescribes the total veiling and segregation of women (Siddiqi, 1988).

Polygamy in Islam has also been subjected to a great deal of criticism from Western society. According to Engineer (1992), this is due to incorrect interpretations and a misunderstanding of the *Quranic* verses. In the past, the main reason for granting permission for plurality of wives was the rapid decrease in the male population due to wars during the time of the Prophet. Polygamy was a way of ensuring that widows and orphans were not left unattended and shelterless. The whole intent was to establish social justice. However, due to male dominated medieval societies, polygamy acquired the status of a divine law for Muslims today. In fact, Islam encourages monogamy but allows polygamy under very special circumstances (Engineer, 1992).

The discussion of marriage remains incomplete without referring to the question of divorce. According to Siddiqi (1988), the idea that divorce is immoral was largely influenced by Christianity and Hinduism. Engineer (1992) contends that Islam is probably the first religion in the world to recognize a woman's right to divorce her husband. She can initiate divorce on account of any physical defect in her husband, ill treatment or cruelty, failure to provide economic sustenance, etc. A woman's right to divorce is absolute and no one can prevent her from exercising it. In fact, the Prophet granted a woman a divorce just because she did not approve of her husband's looks. Hence, it is clear that Islam recognizes a woman's individuality and does not regard her as merely an adjunct to her husband (Engineer, 1992).

Similarly, in Islam a woman whether married or single is seen as a person in her own right and not merely as an extension of her husband (Haneef, 1996). For example, a

woman has full right of ownership and can dispose of her own property and earnings even after marriage. She is also able to maintain her own family name after marriage instead of taking that of her husband. There is no Islamic basis for the stereotype of women as having to occupy the role of cooking, cleaning and looking after the children; this notion of a woman's role in society is considered to be a Western stereotype (Haneef, 1996).

During the pre-Islamic period, women were not, as a rule, given any share in inheritance. However, Islam ensured that women inherited in the capacity of a wife, mother, and daughter (Engineer, 1992). Islamic law considers a woman as having her own legal personality in matters of inheritance and property. She is permitted to make use of her material assets in whatever way she pleases and is in no way obligated to spend her wealth on her husband. The *Quran* clearly states that a wife is to be looked after by her husband even if she possesses a great deal of wealth (Siddiqi, 1988).

According to Bux (2004), the *Sunnah* (traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad revealed that he used to assist his wives in household chores. However, in modern times men are content to ignore this practice and selectively emphasize only that which serves their interests. (Bux, 2004).

In South Africa, the rights of women are emphasized and the constitution clearly states that all citizens should enjoy the same rights and have the same duties irrespective of their gender. However, this view can be problematic for South African Muslims because

traditional Islamic laws are frequently evoked to account for behaviour, particularly behaviour between the sexes (Utas, 1988). South African Muslims are constantly faced with the dilemma of the need for gender equality as required by the South African constitution and at the same time, the need to follow what they consider to be the requirements of Islam. How South African Muslim men deal with this dilemma will depend upon their attitudes towards women and women's role in society. This study explores the attitudes of a sample of South African Muslim men towards women.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Attitudes

An 'attitude' can be defined as "a general and enduring favourable or unfavourable feeling about an object or issue" (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986, p14). Attitudes are 'general feelings' and are not directly observable but they do predispose an individual toward a particular action i.e. positive attitudes incline a person toward positive behaviour (e.g. to approach, to help, etc.), whereas negative attitudes predispose an individual towards negative actions (e.g. to avoid, to hurt, etc.). Therefore, a 'gender-related attitude' focuses on one's attitude towards men, women and sex-role arrangements which are dependent on the individual's evaluation system. For example, an attitude can be influenced by a person's age, gender, socio-economic status, religiosity, level of education, etc. (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986).

2.2 Measuring attitudes

Since attitudes are not directly observable, they can never be directly measurable; as a consequence, all methods of assessing attitudes involve inference from observed behaviour. The most efficient and widely used attitude measure that is able to yield a large amount of information in a short space of time, is a self report measure i.e. what a person thinks or feels can be inferred from what he or she says (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986).

2.2.1 The AWS as a measurement of “attitudes”

A standard way of assessing sexist beliefs about women has been to measure the endorsement of traditional gender roles (Swim and Cohen, 1997). The most common and widely used scale for measuring such beliefs is the Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS) developed by Spence and Helmreich in the early 1970s when the influence of the women’s movement in encouraging psychological research relevant to gender was becoming visible. The content of the AWS suggests that it can identify individuals who hold sexist beliefs towards women because agreement with its items indicates support for differential treatment of women and men, and a belief that women are not as fit as men to perform certain tasks (Swim & Cohen, 1997). Attitudes can be described as being ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal’ in orientation i.e. a conservative attitude is seen as indicative of a negative evaluation of women whereas a liberal viewpoint is regarded as reflecting a favourable attitude (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986).

2.2.2 The development of the AWS

The AWS originally consisted of 55 items that assessed people’s beliefs about the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women compared to those of men. However, a brief version consisting of 15 items was developed in 1973 by Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, which has now become the most widely used measure of gender-role attitudes. The reason for the development of a brief version of the AWS was so that the scale could be completed in a short amount of time. Fifteen items were selected from the original set of 55 on the basis of their superior psychometric properties and are therefore highly correlated with the original version in both males and females (Spence & Hahn, 1997).

The AWS is the most commonly used scale in measuring gender-role attitudes because it allows for the comparison of responses over time, across cultures, and among different respondent groups (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). According to Beere's (1979) handbook of tests and measures related to women's issues, the AWS has been used in over 90 studies between 1972 and 1978. Beere's 1990 handbook of gender-role measures, lists over 300 studies that have used the AWS since 1978, thereby, amply demonstrating its utility (Spence & Hahn, 1997).

2.2.3 Critique of the AWS

The AWS is not, despite its title, a general measure of beliefs about women. McHugh & Frieze (1997) describe the scale as an instrument to measure attitudes towards the rights and roles of women in society. A similar view is held by Spence & Hahn (1997) who have noted that the AWS can be more accurately described as a measure of attitudes toward women's rights rather than attitudes toward women.

Since the mid-1960s, research done in the United States has found that traditional attitudes i.e. the belief that women and men ought to play different roles within and outside the home and must have different rights and privileges, have in a way 'softened', and studies have demonstrated that variables such as gender, socio-economic background, and age have a significant effect in gender-role traditionality (Spence & Hahn, 1997). Swim and Cohen (1997) attribute these changes in response to the AWS over the years to be the result of a decline in the 'overt' endorsement of sexist beliefs i.e.

‘unequal and harmful treatment of women that is readily apparent, visible, and observable, and can be easily documented’ (Swim & Cohen, 1997, p104).

Benokraitis & Feagin (1995) identified three types of sexism that exist in our current socio-political climate i.e. overt (blatant), covert and subtle sexism. Covert sexism involves unequal treatment of women and men in a hidden manner, whereas, subtle sexism is characterized by openly unequal and harmful treatment of women but goes unnoticed because it is seen as normal or customary behaviour. The AWS is seen to be indicative of ‘overt’ sexism because it openly indicates the endorsement of unequal treatment of women and is unlikely to identify individuals who hold ‘covert’ or ‘subtle’ sexist beliefs (Swim & Cohen, 1997). There are recently developed scales which are more suitable in assessing covert and subtle sexism, such as the ‘Modern Sexism Scale’ and the ‘Neosexism Scale’ (Swim & Cohen, 1997).

Researchers have found the AWS to be a problematic scale as it has been characterized as having a ceiling effect, being outdated, and as susceptible to social desirability influences (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Based on participant comments in a study conducted by Loo (1998), it was found that some of the items in the AWS were perceived to be outdated and off-putting. However, it was a useful tool in stimulating class discussions about attitudes toward women and increased awareness of women’s rights and roles in society (Loo, 1998).

Conceptions of appropriate rights and roles for women change over time and therefore, so do our conceptions of what constitutes sexism and feminism. For example, today, few individuals would question women's rights to attend medical school but would still question women wanting to be fire-fighters and combat soldiers; whereas, previously, it was unheard of that a woman might want to enter medical school (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Repeated administrations of the AWS over the last two decades have found that changes *have* occurred in societal attitudes towards women's rights, roles and abilities and therefore the use of the AWS can be problematic in examining contemporary attitudes towards women's roles (McHugh & Frieze, 1997).

2.3 Research on attitude towards women

Interest in attitudes towards women and in measuring such attitudes goes back many decades; although the perspective from which this research is done varies. In the 1980s various studies were conducted which addressed generational differences, personality correlates, occupational preferences and gender relationships (Loo, 1998).

2.3.1 Occupational preferences

In 1986, Harworth, Povey, and Cliff (cited in Loo, 1998) used an adapted version of the AWS to determine the attitudes of male and female students with regard to engineering craft and technician courses versus other traditionally female occupations. The study found that males were not likely to support women entering typically male-oriented occupations, possibly because they felt their male authority and leadership at work would be challenged. However, the males demonstrated a more liberal attitude than the females

about dating, courtship, proposing marriage, and staying up late in contrast to a more traditional attitude toward women drinking and swearing. Loo (1998) suggested that perhaps both men and women are motivated to respond to items based on self-interest.

2.3.2 Age

In 1993, Slevin and Wingrove conducted a study using the AWS in which they observed attitude differences toward the female role across three generations; the study found that the younger generation (college students) was more liberal than the two older generations (Loo, 1998). The study shows consistence with the general finding that age tends to be associated with more traditional attitudes about women's rights (Glick, 2002).

A similar study was conducted by Spence and Hahn (1997) which compared the changes in gender-role attitudes for students at the same university tested in 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1992. It was found that both the male and female students tested in 1992 held a more liberal view than students tested in 1972; however, in all the groups, women were significantly less traditional in their attitudes than men (Spence & Hahn, 1997).

Biri (1981) conducted a study on men's attitudes towards women's roles in Libya. It was found that age was correlated with attitude towards women i.e. younger men held less sexist attitudes toward women compared to older men. However, Khalid and Frieze (2004), in their study of Pakistanis and U.S. immigrant men, found no relationship between age and attitude towards women.

Although Khalid and Frieze (2004) found different results compared to the majority of studies on age and attitudes toward women, it can still be assumed that gender-related attitudes are changing; the world we inhabit has changed over the past decade and it seems logical that people's thoughts and feelings have changed as well. A 1970s replication study of a major gender stereotype study done in the 1950's showed that attitudes towards the female stereotype were slightly more favourable in 1978 than in 1957 (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986). Spence and Helmreich found similar results in 1985 using the AWS; it was found that there was a major shift towards 'liberal' attitudes between 1972 and 1976. Mason, Czajka, and Arber also found that there was a decline in sex-role traditionalism between 1964 and 1974 (quoted in Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986).

2.3.3 Career and family roles as correlates of attitudes towards women

Research done by Hood (1993) found that changes in attitudes are taking place more rapidly than changes in practice. A US study done over a 10 year period, comparing male students' attitudes toward women's and men's roles found that the more recent views were more liberal i.e. in favour of men and women having the right to choose between having a career or opting for a family-life. Although men defended women's rights to choose, most of them felt that they would not choose a domestic role in preference to a career. These men expected that they would be involved in domestic work to some extent, but did not expect their careers to be interrupted by this (Hood, 1993).

Although men are taking on greater responsibility of household tasks than previously, they still have not taken on family roles to the same extent that women have taken on

paid working roles (Burr, 1998). Therefore it can be said that although men express egalitarian attitudes regarding work and family roles, in practice the division of labour in the home continues to operate along unequal, traditional lines.

In Britain, women make up nearly 50% of the work force (Burr, 1998). Yet it was found that on average a woman's pay was estimated to be two-thirds that of men. It was also reported that most women were working in low-paid, part-time and insecure employment; whereas, men were more likely to occupy high status, powerful positions in the working arena i.e. managers were generally men and their secretarial staff, women. Burr (1998) concluded that despite the fact that women were entering full or part-time employment outside the home, they were still primarily responsible for more household tasks compared to men.

In 1998, it was found that 64% of married women with preschool-age children were in the paid labour force compared to 19% in 1960 (Ciabattari, 2001). This movement of mothers into the workforce suggests that expectations and attitudes toward women's activities in the public and private sphere have changed quite significantly i.e. the majority of American men and women approve of women working outside the home, and most men expect their wives to participate in the paid labour force (Ciabattari, 2001). Although attitudes are more accepting of women participating in the labour force than they were in the 1970s, many men still prefer the traditional model of males being the breadwinner as an ideal (Ciabattari, 2001).

Many American men have resisted changes in women's roles because they see these changes as harmful to children, family and society. According to Ciabattari (2001), men tend to express more conservative attitudes than women and the rate of attitude change since the 1970's has been slower for men than for women. Due to the fact that women's attitudes are changing more rapidly than those of men, there is a larger gender difference in attitudes today than there was 25 years ago (Ciabattari, 2001).

2.3.4 Periodic influences

Ciabattari (2001) identifies two perspectives from which changes in attitudes toward women's roles can be viewed. The first perspective focuses on change as a period effect i.e. a new social context (changes in individual-level attitudes lead to changes in society-wide attitudes) resulted from the emergence of the feminist movement in the 1970s as well as from women's educational and labour force participation.

The second perspective focuses on cohort influences i.e. a group of individuals having age, class, or other statistical factors in common, as mediators of attitude change (Ciabattari, 2001). According to this perspective, changes in historical periods do not affect everyone in the same way like the above perspective suggests. Changes in attitude will depend on an individual's cohort and life course stage when these period changes occur. For example, the way in which individuals experienced the 1970s feminist movement was dependent on their cohort and therefore different for everyone (Ciabattari, 2001).

Ciabattari (2001) suggests that changes in men's gender ideologies that have occurred since the 1970s can be explained by both period and cohort influences. Therefore changes in attitudes toward women's roles have resulted from revolutionary changes as well as from changes in the relative sizes of the most egalitarian and most traditional cohorts i.e. the older, more traditional attitudes are replaced by younger, more egalitarian cohorts thereby leading to shifts in attitude at a population-level (Ciabattari, 2001).

Although changes have occurred, many men still remain resistant to accepting full flexibility in women's roles. They expect their spouses to be active in the paid labour force and tend to be treated equally in the public sphere, yet remain less critical of inequality in the home due to benefits they receive from it i.e. defend their own masculine privileges (Ciabattari, 2001).

Ciabattari (2001) conducted a study on men in three US cohorts i.e. pre-baby boom (men born before 1925 to 1944), baby boom (men born 1945 to 1964), and post-baby boom (men born 1965 to 1980) in order to identify the importance of cohorts in affecting attitude change toward the rights and roles of women. It was expected that men born prior to the baby boom would be most traditional in their attitudes because they would have been raised at a time when women's responsibilities focused on the home and family. By the time the feminist movement emerged in the 1970's, many of the men would have finished raising their families and therefore would not be directly affected (Ciabattari, 2001).

Men born during the baby boom were more likely to be affected directly by the feminist movement in the 1970s. Their socialization experiences would favour the traditional view of the women's role; however, their own family would be contradictory to this view i.e. it is highly likely that their wives would be employed and have educational attainments similar to their own. Due to the fact that these men reached adulthood during the feminist movement, the ideological influences of this period would shape their attitudes toward women's roles in the family and the home (Ciabattari, 2001).

Post-baby boom men are more likely to express an egalitarian attitude towards women because they have grown up in an era where it is assumed that gender equality has been achieved. Men born in this particular cohort are reared in a context where women's labour force participation is seen as normal (Ciabattari, 2001).

The results of the study showed that men in the United States have become less conservative about women's roles since the 1970s. Within each period, the oldest cohort (pre-baby boom) is more traditional than the more recent cohort (post-baby boom).

Although the largest difference was seen in the attitudes of the pre-baby boomers and the post-baby boomers, there was a slight difference in attitudes between the baby boomers and the post-baby boomers on several items in the 1990's. It was found that 48% of baby boomers felt that pre-school children suffer if their mother is employed, compared to 41% of post-baby boomers having the same conservative opinion. The largest difference was seen in 63% of pre-baby boomers having a conservative attitude toward working

mothers compared to 48% of baby boomers displaying a similar attitude (Ciabattari, 2001).

2.3.5 Marital status

In contemporary society there is much confusion over family expectations and marital gender roles. Many men still prefer the traditional family form, yet a large number of them would also like their wives to work and bring in a second income as well as take responsibility for childrearing (Kimmel & Aronson, 2000). Many college-educated women would like to have full-blown work careers combined with marriage yet are uncertain about how family responsibilities and child care will mesh with work goals (Kimmel & Aronson, 2000).

According to Kimmel and Aronson (2000), before children arrive, gender roles across all segments of society have become more egalitarian compared to the past. For example, typically both partners work outside the home and both share in domestic responsibilities. However, once children are born, the situation of marital-role similarity suddenly changes; the wife is expected to stay at home and take care of the child and the husband becomes the sole breadwinner. Gender-role expectations change and the couple revert to the traditional family form.

Men's gender role attitudes are influenced to a large extent by their marital status and spousal work status (Ciabattari, 2001). Rice and Coates (1995) found that married men held more conservative attitudes toward women, than those who are not married. It was

also found by Banaszak and Plutzer (1993) that married men whose wives were employed full time reported less conservative attitudes compared to men whose wives were employed part-time or not at all.

2.3.6 Culture

Culture is also strongly associated with gender ideologies (Glick, 2002). Damji and Lee conducted research in 1995 on a sample of Canadian Ismaili Muslim men in order to identify their perceptions of appropriate gender roles. The study found that the attitudes of these men resembled other men's attitudes in demonstrating a more traditional outlook towards gender roles; thus, suggesting a global trend across cultures.

Research done by Hunter and Sellers (1998) opposes the above view of gender role attitudes as being similar across cultures. Studies have found that African Americans are more likely to support feminist positions i.e. liberal attitudes, than white Americans of either gender. In comparison to African American women, like white men, African American men are less likely to support egalitarian gender role ideologies. However, they are more likely to acknowledge gender inequality than are white men and women. Studies suggest that African American men are more liberal in their attitudes about working women than white and Hispanic men because of the African American women's position in the family i.e. their economic contribution to the household (Hunter & Sellers, 1998).

2.3.7 Socio-economic status

A study done by Spence and Helmreich (1978) suggests that an individual's socio-economic status affects the way in which they respond to the AWS scale. It was found that upper-class students expressed the most liberal attitudes toward women compared to the lower-class students who held traditional attitudes toward women's roles. A similar view is held by Ciabattari (2001) who found men with lower levels of income to report more conservative gender role attitudes. Ciabattari (2001) suggests that this could be due to these men being concerned about their role as providers, and therefore may show a reluctance to share this role with women out of fear of altering their place as household head.

2.3.8 Religion and education

Several researchers have compared the attitude towards women from a religious and educational perspective as these are two important socializing institutions, and they affect large numbers of people in most societies. However, these two institutions can be seen as working at cross-purposes, with traditional religions justifying gender inequality as divinely mandated and educational systems challenging traditional beliefs and affording women increased access to career opportunities (Glick, 2002).

2.3.8.1 Education

According to Spence and Hahn (1997), higher education is consistently associated with less sexist attitudes as can be seen in all research conducted with college samples. Helmreich et al. (1982) conducted a study involving a comparison of scores using the

AWS on three cohorts of college students in Texas tested in 1972, 1976 and 1980. It was found that both men and women tested in 1976 and 1980 endorsed less traditional attitudes than those tested in 1972. Similarly Glick (2002) deduced that college men and women tend to be less traditional in their gender ideology than their less educated parents and grandparents (Glick, 2002). Ciabattari (2001) also suggests that men with lower levels of education report more conservative gender role attitudes. In addition, studies done by Biri (1981) in Libya also found that higher levels of education were correlated with less sexist attitudes toward women.

Oliver (1996) conducted a study on 267 well educated men who held positions in administration or management (suggesting high levels of income) in order to ascertain their attitudes about the traditional male role. Their responses to items in Modern / Traditional Ideas on opinions about women suggested that these men supported the notion of women having careers outside the home.

Contrary to the majority of studies done on education and attitude towards women, Khalid and Frieze (2004) failed to find a relationship between education and attitude towards women in their study of Pakistani and U.S. immigrant men. Therefore, overall the results can be said to be inconclusive regarding level of education and attitude towards women.

However, according to Hunter & Sellers (1998), an individual's level of education and income, has a liberalizing effect on his/her attitude towards sex discrimination. It was

found that women who had a high level of income and education had a heightened awareness of gender inequality. In men, education coupled with marriage, seem to have a similar effect on attitudes toward women i.e. men are directly affected by the limited economic opportunities of their wives and therefore are more aware of gender inequality than unmarried men. Hunter and Sellers (1998), suggest that African American men are more liberal in their attitudes toward working women because they depend on their wives' employment to make ends meet.

2.3.8.2 Religion

According to research on religious beliefs, strict adherence to religious beliefs is correlated with conservative attitudes toward women i.e. greater sexism. Researchers also found that women were more tolerant and less sexist than men and that members of Christian religions tend to be more sexist than Jews or the nonreligious (Harville & Rienzi, 2000).

There is evidence to support the notion that practitioners of well established religious traditions tend to show greater adherence to gender roles. For example, a study conducted in Spain by De-Miguel in 1997 (cited in Glick, 2002), found that in Catholicism women are prohibited from occupying powerful roles in the church i.e. priests, bishops or popes. Traditional gender roles are strongly endorsed by the Catholic hierarchy which suggests that men and women have different, divinely inspired traits and roles (Glick, 2002). Further research done by Sanchez and Hall in 1999 (cited in Glick, 2002) on a sample of Spanish households yielded similar results; practising Catholicism was associated with a

traditional division of household labour i.e. women adhering to the role of performing work within the household and being less likely to participate in employment outside the home (Glick, 2002).

A similar form of sexism can also be seen in the United States Protestant evangelical organizations i.e. "Promise Keepers". They stress the dominance of men's roles over those of women. The attitude is condoned by the notion that men are portrayed as 'serving' or helping women by taking charge and not as being dominating (Glick, 2002).

Many Judeo-Christian doctrines teach that the ideal role for women is that of a wife and mother who stays at home. Harville and Rienzi (2000) conducted a study to examine the relationship between Judeo-Christian beliefs and attitudes toward employed women. It was found that men's and women's attitudes are changing in a gradual manner, but that men and women hold very different attitudes about working women, even within the same religious affiliation i.e. women had a more liberal attitude towards working women than men. This could perhaps be the result of women changing their attitudes to coincide with the reality of the changing roles of women (Harville & Rienzi, 2000) and men still feeling a bit threatened by women taking an equal role in society.

The study done by Harville and Rienzi (2000) concluded that religion does have an influence on attitudes toward employed women. However, many other factors should be taken into consideration such as gender, socioeconomic status, education, and personal experience.

Islam, like Christianity, also shares traditions that justify fairly rigid gender roles and attitudes. Research conducted by Khalid (2004), using an adapted version of the AWS on a Pakistani sample of men and women found that males had a more conservative attitude than females. Conservative men were less likely to believe that men who beat their wives should be put in jail; they felt that a husband slapping his wife is a way of showing love and that the problem of battered wives is highly exaggerated.

Another study conducted by Haj-Yahia (2003) among a random sample of 362 Arab husbands in Israel on the contribution of patriarchal ideology toward explaining their beliefs about wife-beating found results similar to those of Khalid (2004). Fifty eight percent (58%) of the participants felt that there was no excuse for a man to beat his wife; however, 15-62% still justified wife beating for certain reasons i.e. adultery, failure to obey husbands, and disrespect for parents and relatives. It was also found that 52% of these participants condoned the behaviour and 23-43% even blamed the wife for violence against her.

Similarly, research done by Ali and Toner (2001) on a sample of Muslim men and women in Canada found that Muslim men had a more lenient attitude toward wife abuse compared to Canadian Muslim women and North American norms. In addition, research done by Almosaed (2004) on a sample of Arab Muslim men and women, examined attitudes toward wife abuse and violence against women in the Saudi society. It was found that the majority of males approved of physical punishment as an effective way of

dealing with female 'misconduct' whilst females felt that men who abused women were not 'real men' and were only taking advantage of their positions.

A study was conducted in Lebanon by Abouchedid (2007) on a sample of Muslim students. The study found that religiosity was associated with traditional gender roles i.e. the more religious an individual, the more conservative their attitude was towards women. Contrary to this study, Biri (1981) found no relationship between religiosity and sex-role attitudes in a study conducted in Libya on men's attitudes towards women's roles.

2.4 Conclusion to literature review

The review of the literature has shown that while the majority of studies found that education level was associated with attitude towards women, Khalid and Frieze (2004) found no relationship between attitude toward women and education. Similarly, studies done with age, and level of religiosity as predictors of attitude towards women, also varied in their results.

It is evident from the literature review that there have been no studies to date on attitudes of Muslim men in South Africa towards women. South Africa is a country with its own history and culture and I believe that the study will generate a lot of interesting information.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology

The study was a quantitative, cross-sectional survey, in which self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from participants. The survey is a non-experimental, descriptive research method. It is useful in collecting data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed (Babbie, 1973). Hence, this method was deemed fit for the research on hand. According to Babbie (1973), the survey method has both advantages and disadvantages in its usage.

The survey method is advantageous because it is cost effective and allows for the efficient collection of information from a large number of respondents. Also, the information can be obtained immediately. The survey method allows for easy administration and takes a short time to complete. Standardised questions make measurement more precise by enforcing uniform definitions on the respondents (Babbie, 1973).

The survey method is disadvantageous as respondents must be able to read, see and write in order to participate and responses are limited to those who are on-site only. Also, closed-ended questions don't allow for respondents to give 'rich' responses. Further disadvantages of the survey method are that errors can occur due to non-response of items and possible bias from the administrator (Babbie, 1973).

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were a convenience sample of 118 South African Muslim males aged 18-70 years ($M=34.78$, $SD=12.14$). The majority of the participants (115; 97.5%) were of Indian origin, two were Black (1.7%) and one participant was Coloured (0.8%). Sixty one (51.7%) participants had obtained a secondary level of education and 54 (45.8%) had obtained a tertiary level education. Three (2.5%) participants did not disclose their educational level. Thirty two of the men (27.1%) in the sample were single, eighty one (68.6%) were married, three (2.5%) were divorced, and one (0.8%) was widowed. One (0.8%) participant did not disclose his marital status.

3.3 Measures

Apart from biographical information (Appendix 2) which included race, age, highest level of education completed, occupation and marital status, the participants completed the following two questionnaires :

3.3.1 Islamic Attitudes Toward Women Scale (LAWS) (Appendix 3).

This scale was adapted by Khalid (2004) from the Spence and Helmreich (1972) Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS) used to measure gender-role attitudes. Khalid (2004) selected 9 items from the AWS and added 21 items to incorporate issues of special concern for Muslims, making a 30-item scale. Respondents were required to rate each item on a four-point scale ranging from 1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree. Some items were reverse scored. Items were scored according to the original AWS so that

higher scores reflected a more egalitarian and less sexist attitude. The range of scores possible was from 0 to 120. The Cronbach alpha obtained for this scale was .91.

3.3.2 Religiosity Measures Questionnaire (RMQ) (Appendix 4).

This scale was developed by Rohrbaugh & Jessor in 1975 (as cited in Hill & Hood, 1999) in an attempt to evaluate the impact of religion on an individual's daily, secular life as well as to determine the extent of individual participation in ritual practices. The measure was intended to be applicable to religiosity in general. The questionnaire consisted of eight multiple-choice items. Each item was scored from 0 (option indicating least religiosity) to 4 (option indicating greatest religiosity). The range of scores possible was from 0 to 32. Cronbach coefficient alphas were over .90, indicating high internal consistency for the measure.

3.4 Procedure

An Islamic school in Durban was approached for the study. The questionnaires were distributed to the children in the school. They were instructed to take the questionnaires home for their fathers to complete and then bring them back to school. Each questionnaire had a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study and its implications (Appendix 1). Potential participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, of which eight were returned. Due to the poor response rate, a further 500 questionnaires were distributed in the same way and at the same school, of which only 12 were returned.

It was clear that this method was not going to yield adequate numbers of completed questionnaires. The researcher (with the help of an assistant) then resorted to approaching potential participants at the Durban beachfront; they were informed of the nature of the study and were asked if they would be prepared to complete the questionnaires and that it would take ten minutes of their time. Questionnaires were collected as soon as they were completed. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, but only 118 were used because of the large number of missing items in the rest.

3.5 Data Analysis

The SPSS 13.0 programme was used to analyse data. Correlations were done with level of religiosity and attitude towards women in order to determine whether level of religiosity had an influence on ones attitude toward women. Age was correlated with religiosity to determine whether a person's age had any influence on their level of religiosity. Age was also correlated with attitude toward women in order to ascertain a relationship between the two i.e. whether a persons age influences their attitude toward women.

T-tests were conducted with educational level, marital status and attitude toward women. These tests were done in order to determine if ones educational level and marital status had any influence on their attitude toward women. In addition, t-tests were done with education, marital status and religiosity to determine if a person's educational level and marital status had any influence on their level of religiosity. An item-frequency was conducted for both the LAWS and the RMQ. Thereafter, an inter-item correlation was

done between religiosity and attitude toward women in order to determine whether there is a significant relationship between items on the RMQ and the total scores on the IAWS.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct the research, approval (ethical clearance) had to be gained from the Ethical Review Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Informed consent from participants i.e. the nature of the research was explained in a language that was reasonably understood by participants. They were informed that participation was voluntary and if they chose to participate, they would be free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Participants were assured of confidentiality i.e. they would remain anonymous.

Participants were informed that the information collected would be stored at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and if interested, they would be able to access the final research report once it was completed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Sample

The participants in this study were a convenience sample of 118 South African Muslim males aged 18-70 years. One hundred and fifteen participants were of Indian origin, two were Black and one participant was Coloured. Sixty one participants had obtained a secondary level of education and 54 had obtained a tertiary level education. Three participants did not disclose their educational level. Thirty two of the men in the sample were single, eighty one were married, three were divorced, and one was widowed. One participant did not disclose his marital status.

Table One below shows group mean scores, standard deviations and alpha coefficients for the LAWS and the RMQ.

TABLE 1: Group Means and Standard Deviations for the LAWS and Religiosity Scales

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha Co-efficient
LAWS	59.02	13.63	0.83
Religiosity	26.15	5.82	0.38

The low alpha score of 0.38 for the RMQ suggested that the items on this scale were heterogeneous, and therefore seemed to be measuring different aspects of religiosity. Because of this, individual items on the RMQ were analysed.

Table Two below shows that there was no significant relationship between religiosity and attitude towards women. Age was significantly correlated with attitudes towards women ($p < 0.01$) and with religiosity ($p < 0.05$). The older the men, the more liberal their attitude toward women, the older the men, the more religious they were.

TABLE 2 : Correlation between religiosity and attitude towards women, age and attitude towards women and religiosity

	Religiosity	Attitude towards women	Age
<u>Religiosity</u>			
Pearson correlation	1	.079	0.198*
Sig. (2-tailed)		.439	0.39
<u>Attitude towards women</u>			
Pearson correlation	.079	1	0.289**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.439		0.003

Table Three shows the scores for the t-tests for marital status and attitude towards women, and educational level and attitude towards women. No significant relationship was found between marital status and attitude towards women, or between education level and attitude towards women.

TABLE 3 : Marital status and attitude towards women; educational level and attitude towards women.

	t-value	mean	Standard deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
<u>Marital status</u>	-1.749			
Single		55.7241	12.52682	-
married		60.7324	13.17569	.083
<u>Education level</u>	-1.778			
Secondary		56.6226	13.64696	-
tertiary		61.4082	13.51838	.078

Table Four below shows the scores for the t-tests for marital status and religiosity, and educational level and religiosity. Assuming equal variance, marital status was significant ($p < 0.05$). Married men were found to be more religious than single men. Education level was also significant ($p < 0.05$) (assuming unequal variance). The more educated the men, the more religious they were.

TABLE 4 : Marital status and religiosity; educational level and religiosity.

	mean	Standard deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
<u>Marital status</u>			
Single	24.3333	3.53635	-
married	26.9600	6.48999	.039

Education level			
Secondary	24.9825	4.05098	-
tertiary	27.5800	7.22832	.027

Table Five below shows the item frequency table for the LAWS.

Table 5 : Item frequency table for the LAWS (in percentages)

	Agree	Disagree	No response
Women should not be given any responsibility outside the home	(25.4) 30	(74.6) 88	(0) 0
Women should be allowed to assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men	(72.9) 86	(27.1) 32	(0) 0
Men and women should have equal status in the society	(71.2) 84	(28.0) 33	(0.8) 1
Women should only be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, than with desires for professional and business careers	(38.1) 45	(61.9) 73	(0) 0
Women should be considered as full partners with men	(73.7) 87	(24.6) 29	(1.7) 2

Women should be able to participate fully with men in all activities of worship and prayer	(40.7) 48	(58.5) 69	(0.8) 1
Women should be regarded as religiously and spiritually equal to men	(83.9) 99	(15.3) 18	(0.8) 1
The seclusion of women should be encouraged in the community	(61.0) 72	(35.6) 42	(3.4) 4

Some responses are contradictory to each other. The majority of respondents (72.9%) felt that women should be given the opportunity to participate in activities outside the home and should be considered as full partners with men, yet 61% of the men also believed that seclusion of women should be encouraged in the society. Most of the men (83%) were of the opinion that women should be regarded as spiritually and religiously equal to men, whereas, only 40.7% thought that women should participate fully with men in all activities of worship and prayer.

Table Six below shows the item frequency for the RMQ

Table 6 : Item frequency table for Religiosity scale (in percentages)

ITEM 1	0	1	Up to 7 times	Up to 14 times	More than 14 times
On average, how many times a week do you go to mosque?	(0) 0	(20.3) 24	(33.1) 39	(13.6) 16	(33.1) 39

ITEM 2	Prayer is a regular part of my daily life	pray in times of stress but not other time	Pray only during formal ceremonies	Prayer has little importance in my life	I never pray	No response
Which describes your practice of prayer	(86.4) 102	(9.3) 11	(3.4) 4	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0.8) 1

ITEM 3	Strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	Strongly agree	No response
Do you agree with the statement "religion gives me comfort and security in life"	(12.7) 15	(0) 0	(0.8) 1	(10.2) 12	(75.4) 89	(0.8) 1

ITEM 4	Almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	No response
When you have a serious personal problem, how often do you take religious advice or teaching into consideration?	(60.2) 71	(21.2) 25	(14.4) 17	(2.5) 3	(0.8) 1	(0.8) 1

ITEM 6	No influence	A small influence	Some influence	A fair amount of influence	A large influence	No response
How much of an influence would you say that religion has on the way you choose to spend your time each day	(2.5) 3	(6.8) 8	(32.2) 38	(19.5) 23	(37.3) 44	(1.7) 2

All responses indicate that the participants had a high level of religiosity.

Table Seven below shows those items on the RMQ that were significantly correlated with the total scores on the LAWS.

Table 7: Inter-item correlation between religiosity and attitudes toward women.

	Level of religiosity
A man should not help his wife with the tasks that are assigned to her	.194*
Women who have been divorced by their husbands should be allowed to keep their young children	.314**
For marriage, the consent of a woman should be as important as the consent of a man	-.205*
Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry	.219*
Women should not be relegated to insignificant roles in the society	.437**
It is not necessary for women to be covered from head to toe they go out	-.221*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Religiosity was significantly correlated with attitude towards women ($p < 0.01$) on items such as : *women who have been divorced by their husbands should be allowed to keep their young children* and *women should not be relegated to insignificant roles in the*

society. There was also a significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) between religiosity and attitude towards women on the following items : a man should not help his wife with tasks assigned to her, for marriage, the consent of a women should be as important as the consent of a man; men should participate in household chores, and it is not necessary for a women to be covered from head to toe when she goes out.

The results found that the more religious the man the less likely he believed that a man should help his wife with tasks that are assigned to her and was less likely to agree with the statement that the consent of a woman is just as important as the consent of a man for marriage. The more religious the man, the more likely he felt that divorced woman should be allowed to keep her children and should not be relegated to insignificant roles in the society. The less religious the man the more likely he believed that a woman should not be covered from head to toe when she leaves the home. Furthermore, the results found that the less religious the man, the less likely he believed the statement that under modern economic conditions, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study contradicts the common western stereotype of Muslim men as having a conservative attitude towards women. Most men in this study had high scores on the LAWS reflecting an egalitarian and less sexist attitude. This was contrary to the findings of Ali & Toner's (2001) study on Muslim men in Canada, and Almosaed (2004) on a study of Muslim men in Saudi Arabia. They found that Muslim men approved of physical punishment for the 'misconduct' of women. Similarly, Khalid (2004) found that conservative men felt that a husband slapping his wife is acceptable and the problem of battered wives is highly exaggerated. The difference in the results could be due to South African men being socialized in a country that believes in democracy and egalitarianism. According to Alsop et al. (2002), a person's socialization and life experience contributes to the formation of gender role attitudes.

The study found that the majority of respondents believed that women should be given the opportunity to participate in activities outside the home and should be considered as full partners with men. However, they also felt that seclusion of women should be encouraged in the society. Responses also indicate that men believed that women should be regarded as spiritually and religiously equal to men, whereas, at the same time, they felt that women should be denied the right to participate fully with men in all activities of worship and prayer. From the responses it is possible that respondents may not have been entirely truthful, but were inclined to respond according to what they felt was 'expected' of them. The AWS has been characterized as being susceptible to social desirability

influences (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Perhaps, negative responses could have repercussions for the men i.e. if they expressed some form of inequality towards women, they may have felt that they will be perceived in an unfavourable way by the researcher.

The study found that the older the men, the more liberal their attitude towards women. These findings are not consistent with previous research. Khalid & Frieze (2004) found no significant relationship between age and attitude towards women. The study conducted by Biri (1981) in Libya found that younger men were more egalitarian in their view of women as opposed to older men. Similarly, Loo (1998) found that the younger generation of college students were more liberal than the older generations that participated in the study. In addition, Glick (2002) also found that attitudes about women's rights were more traditional as the men got older. A possible explanation is that older South African men feel less threatened about their own gender roles and therefore have a more liberal attitude towards women.

It was predicted that marital status would be related to attitudes towards women. According to Ciabattari (2001), studies have found that married men hold a more conservative attitude towards women than those who are not married. This is because many men still prefer the traditional model of males being the breadwinner the ideal, even though attitudes have become more accepting of women participating in the labour force than they were in the 1970s (Ciabattari, 2001). Similarly, Kimmel and Aronson (2000) found that while men still preferred the traditional family form, they wanted their wives to bring in a second income and take responsibility for childrearing. However, this

study found no significant relationship between marital status and attitude towards women. This could be attributed to respondents not taking the questionnaire seriously or perhaps the scales used did not measure what they claimed to measure as pointed out by McHugh & Frieze (1997) and Spence & Hahn (1997). They described the AWS as an instrument to measure attitudes towards the rights and roles of women in society rather than a measure of attitudes towards women.

The study found no significant relationship between level of education and attitude towards women. Similarly, Khalid & Frieze (2004), found no relationship between education and attitude towards women in a study conducted on a sample of Pakistani and US immigrant Muslim men. However, Biri's (1981) study in Libya, found that the more educated the men, the more liberal their attitude was towards women. Similar results were yielded in studies done by Spence & Hahn (1997), Glick (2002), Ciabattari (2001) and Oliver (1996) where it was found that educated men had an egalitarian attitude towards women.

Various studies have found that level of religiosity was highly correlated with attitudes towards women. Harville & Rienzi (2000) and Glick (2002), found that strict adherence to religious beliefs leads to greater sexism. Similarly, a study conducted by Abouchedid (2007) in Lebanon found that a high level of religiosity was associated with traditional gender roles. Contrary to these studies, but similar to Biri's (1981) findings this study found that there was no relationship between level of religiosity and attitude towards women.

The study found some responses to be contradictory to each other regarding religiosity and attitudes toward women. It was found that the more religious the man, the more likely he believed that a man should not help his wife with tasks that are assigned to her. However, it was also found that the more religious the man, the more likely he was to agree with the statement that under modern economic conditions, with women being active outside the home, men should help women in household tasks. This could be attributed to respondents not being entirely truthful in their responses or perhaps the questionnaire was worded ambiguously and therefore not understood correctly.

The study also found some responses to be unexpected i.e. unusual taking the sample into consideration. It was found that the more religious the man, the more likely he believed that women who have been divorced by their husbands should be allowed to keep their young children. This was unusual as Islam teaches that male children should be raised by their father after a certain age in the event of a divorce. Perhaps the question was unclear as it refers to “young children” and does not specify an age, hence the finding. The study also found that the more religious the man, the less likely he believed that the consent of a woman is just as important as the consent of a man in marriage. This was unusual as Islam teaches that the consent of a woman is essential for marriage.

There were a few expected findings i.e. the more religious the man, the more likely he believed that women should not be relegated to insignificant roles in society. It was also found that the more religious the man, the more likely he believed that women should be

covered from head to toe when they go out. These findings are not unusual as they encompass the teachings of Islam.

It was found that age, marital status and educational level were significantly related to level of religiosity. The older the man, the higher his level of religiosity. Similarly, more educated men were more likely to have a higher level of religiosity and married men were more religious than single men. These findings could be explored in future research.

The limitations of the present study include the fact that 97.5% of the participants were of Indian origin and the research did not take into account the possible impact of factors such as culture and socio-economic status. Future studies could be conducted with participants from different cultures and socio-economic status, so as to judge the effects of these factors on results. It would also be interesting to conduct a similar study with South African Muslim females.

The method used in obtaining responses i.e. close-ended questionnaires, is another limitation of the study. The study could have been strengthened by conducting in-depth qualitative interviews to generate 'rich' responses. It was also difficult to get participants to participate in the study. Therefore a qualitative study would have required fewer people to participate and responses might have been more detailed. Also in order to improve participation, participants could have been offered an incentive.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COVERING LETTER EXPLAINING PURPOSE OF STUDY TO PARTICIPANTS

15 June 2006

Dear Sir,

My name is Rizwana Ahmed and I am currently a Masters student in Clinical Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of the requirements of the course, I have to complete a research project. My project aims to examine attitudes toward women among South African Muslim males under the supervision of Zubeda Paruk (Clinical Psychologist) who is a lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

In order for the study to be a success, I require as many men as possible to participate. I would be very grateful if you would consent to participate in my study. Participation is completely voluntary and confidentiality is ensured by the fact that you can remain anonymous. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. All information gathered from the study will be treated in a confidential manner and will be stored at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The final research report will be available to you should you be interested in the findings.

If you decide to participate, kindly spend about 10 minutes of your time answering the attached questionnaires.

Thank you

Rizwana Ahmed

APPENDIX 2

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

RACE :	INDIAN BLACK WHITE COLOURED
DATE OF BIRTH :	
AGE :	
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED :	PRIMARY EDUCATION SECONDARY EDUCATION TERTIARY EDUCATION
OCCUPATION :	
MARITAL STATUS :	SINGLE MARRIED DIVORCED WIDOWED

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (Islamic Attitude Towards Women Scale)

You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly by CIRCLING the appropriate response.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

2. The right of divorce should be given to both the husband, as well as to the wife.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

3. A man should consult his wife when making any major decision.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

4. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

5. A man should not help his wife with the tasks that are assigned to her.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

6. Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

7. Women should not be given any responsibility outside the home.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

8. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex in society.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

9. Women should be allowed to assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

10. Women should concentrate only on their duties as good wives and mothers.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

11. Women should be regarded as intellectually inferior to men

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

12. Women who have been divorced by their husbands should be allowed to keep their young children.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

13. In families sons should be given more encouragement to get education than daughters.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

14. For marriage, the consent of a woman should be as important as the consent of a man.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

15. Women should be permitted to inherit and own property.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

16. Men and women should have equal status in the society.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

17. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry, etc.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

18. Women should be only concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

19. The intellectual leadership of the community should be only in the hands of men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

20. Women should be allowed to take full advantage of educational and professional opportunities.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

21. Women should not be relegated to insignificant roles in the society.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

22. A woman should have clearly defined legal rights in negotiating the marriage contract.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

23. It is not necessary that women should be covered from head to toe whenever she goes out.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

24. Women should be considered as full partners with men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

25. Women should study only subjects that are geared to make them the best and the most productive wives, mothers, and female participants in the family structure.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

26. Women should be able to participate fully with men in all activities of worship and prayer.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

27. The practice of veiling women should be regarded as more of a cultural than a religious requirement.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

28. Women should be regarded as religiously and spiritually equal to men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

29. The seclusion of women should be encouraged in the community.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

30. Many scriptures describing the inferiority of women should not be given importance, as they are developed by the male-oriented community.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (Religiosity Measures Questionnaire)

You are asked to 'CIRCLE' the most appropriate response.

1. On average, how many times a week do you go to mosque?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. up to 7 times
 - d. up to 14 times
 - e. more than 14

2. Which of the following best describes your practice of prayer or religious meditation?
 - a. prayer is a regular part of my daily life
 - b. I usually pray in times of stress or need but rarely at any other time
 - c. I pray only during formal ceremonies
 - d. Prayer has little importance in my life
 - e. I never pray

3. Do you agree with the following statement: " religion gives me a great amount of comfort and security in life. "
 - a. strongly disagree
 - b. disagree
 - c. uncertain
 - d. agree
 - e. strongly agree

4. When you have a serious personal problem, how often do you take religious advice or teaching into consideration ?
 - a. almost always
 - b. usually
 - c. sometimes
 - d. rarely
 - e. never

5. During the past year, how often have you experienced a feeling of religious reverence or devotion?
 - a. almost daily
 - b. frequently
 - c. sometimes
 - d. rarely
 - e. never

6. How much of an influence would you say that religion has on the way you choose to act and the way you choose to spend your time each day?
 - a. no influence
 - b. a small influence
 - c. some influence
 - d. a fair amount of influence
 - e. a large influence

7. Which of the following statements comes closest to your belief about life after death (immortality) ?
 - a. I believe in a personal life after death, a soul existing as a specific individual
 - b. I believe in a soul existing after death as a part of a universal spirit
 - c. I believe in life after death of some kind, but I really don't know what it would be like

PTO

- d. I don't know whether there is any kind of life after death, and I don't know if I ever will know
- e. I don't believe in any kind of life after death

8. Which of the following statements comes closest to your belief about God
- a. I am sure that God really exists and that He is active in my life
 - b. Although I sometimes question His existence, I do believe in God and believe He knows of me as a person
 - c. I don't know if there is a personal God, but I do believe in a higher power of some kind
 - d. I don't know if there is a personal God or a higher power of some kind, and I don't know if I ever will know
 - e. I don't believe in a personal God or in a higher power