

**IMPACT OF BELIEF SYSTEM ON THE CADAVERIC ORGAN DONATION INTENTION AMONG YOUTH IN PAKISTAN****Sitwat Ali***Lecturer in Sociology, Govt. Graduate College, Main Multan Road, Vehari***Dr. Muhammad Nafees\****Assistant Professor of Sociology, National Business School, The University of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan***Sana Javaid***Lecturer in Sociology, Govt. Associate College for Women, Balkasar, Chakwal Punjab, Pakistan***Hafiza Aqsa Khan***Lecturer in Sociology, Govt. Graduate College, Ravi Road, Shahdara, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan***Dr. Sobia Maqsood***Lecturer Department of National Business School, The University of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.**\*Corresponding author: Dr. Muhammad Nafees ([muhammad.nafees.nbs@tuf.edu.pk](mailto:muhammad.nafees.nbs@tuf.edu.pk))***DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.71146/kjmr296>**Article Info**

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**Abstract**

Transplantation of organs and tissues has become a very popular cure for the people experiencing organ failure. However, in spite of the popularity of this practice the nations around the world are facing scarcity of organs compared to the requirements. Like other countries the rate of cadaveric organ donations in Pakistan is very low hence organ donors are generally living relatives and friends of the precipitants. Belief system has huge impact on the attitudes of the people regarding cadaveric organ donation. In the light of this situation, and the impact of belief system on the intentions of the people, this study was conducted with the aim to discover the impact of belief system on the cadaveric organ donation intention among the youth. Employing quantitative approach, the present study was conducted in the Punjab, Pakistan. Target population was the university students who were selected through multistage sampling technique from different universities in Punjab Pakistan. A total of 300 students were interviewed using a self-designed questionnaire. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics and Chi-square and Gamma tests were applied through SPSS version 21. The results showed that young generation has reservations regarding idea of organ donation after death due to their negative perception about the permissibility of cadaveric organ donation according to their belief system. Therefore, it is imperative that their awareness about the permissibility and importance of deceased organ donation is enhanced through different awareness campaigns.

**Keywords:***Cadaveric Organ Donation, Belief system, Youth, Students*

## Introduction

The improvements in methods of transplantation and organ preservation have made transplantation of organs and tissues a very popular cure for the people experiencing organ failure (Umair et al., 2020). The donation of organs means a procedure whereby a tissue or organ is taken from the body of the person donating the organ through operation and placed in the body of the patient. Due to being a very successful innovation in the medical science, donation of organs has emerged as a widespread lifesaving option for the people in need, especially for patients with organ failure; this method is the preferred globally. (Millar, Lerpiniere, Walker, Smith, & Bell, 2008). However, in spite of the popularity of this procedure throughout the globe, almost every country is facing shortage of organs in comparison with its requirement. Annually, six thousand people die due to the unavailability of organs (Saigol, 2014). The developing countries have not made adequate research efforts although the number of patients with organ failure is becoming high and medical facilities are insufficient (Saleem et al., 2009). There are two kinds of organs donation: organ donation by living individuals and cadaveric organ donation (donation of organs after death). The major way of obtaining organs in developed world is through posthumous organ donation. However, in the developing countries like Pakistan organs are donated by living persons mostly (Noorani, 2008). Pakistan's cadaveric organ donation rate is the lowest in the world (Umair et al., 2020). A big hurdle in organ shortages is the scarcity of cadaveric organ donation that is influenced by public attributes such as myths, religious misunderstandings, and insufficient understanding of religious decisions in this regard (Ilango et al., 2014). Although every religion in Asia approves the idea of deceased organ donation but due to the misconceptions in this regard among people, they show hesitations in cadaveric organ donations (Vathsala, 2004). Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country, follows Islamic principles that significantly influence personal decisions, including healthcare, emphasizing the importance of preserving human life. (Golmakani, Niknam, & Hedayat, 2005). Most of the Muslim religious intellectuals, leaders and organizations allow donation of organs by living individuals and cadavers. However, in case of organ donation by deceased persons, the legal aspects of brain death are still vague according to the religious standards (Sharif, 2012). The misconceived beliefs regarding the permissibility of cadaveric organ donation among the young generation in Pakistani society is the major reason for low rates of organ donation after death.

## Review of Literature

Bokek-Cohen, Abu-Rakia, Azuri, & Tarabeih, (2022) stated that the concerns for the religious legitimacy of cadaveric organ donation hinder people's willingness to give consent for organ donation after death. This becomes one of the major reasons for the shortage of organs for transplantation. Muthiah et al. (2021) in their study aiming to assess the major hurdles in organ donation mentioned that the level of awareness among people and their religious and ethnic affiliations contribute to the willingness for organ donation. Newton (2011) in a meta-analysis on qualitative research regarding cadaveric organ donation concluded that people's religious beliefs about deceased organ donation are on a spectrum from complete acceptance to fully rejecting the idea. The bases for the rejection of cadaveric organ donation are the concerns of body integrity and specific burial practices. Though, many religions favor organ donation based on the notion of helping people. (Wakefield, Reid, & Homewood, 2011) conducted a research study to assess the impact of religious affiliations on the views regarding organ donation in Australia. The study concluded that people who have strong religious beliefs, specifically Muslims and Buddhists, generally had negative attitudes, lower knowledge levels and strong opposition to organ donation. Another study by Vincent, Sood, Thanigachalam, Cook, & Randhawa, (2024) aimed to find out the impact of different religious beliefs on the organ donation intention in Indian population. The results showed that specific rituals and beliefs regarding afterlife discouraged organ donation. The study discussed the important role of religious leaders to create awareness in this regard. Padela & Zaganjor, (2014) in their study on Muslims in the US concluded that some Muslims due to the notion that their difficulties are a punishment from God may be hesitant in organ donation because they fear that it could negatively affect organ recipients. Ali et al.,

(2020) in their research based on Muslim majority countries explored that despite support from religious scholars, the misconception about permissibility of organ donation and conventional beliefs hinder actual organ donation decision.

**Significance of the Study**

The availability of organ for transplantation is a very important medical need. Due to the lack of willingness among people for organ donation after death, most of the organ transplant patients rely on living donor. This makes the availability of organs a major concern for the medical system in the country. (Ullah et al., 2023) In order to counter this grave dilemma, the awareness and educational programs need to focus on cultural factors especially the role played by religious beliefs. Therefore, this study sought to assess the impact of religious beliefs on the organ donation intention of young people (the most suitable potential donor force of the country). The aim of the study was to add to the knowledge base regarding the factors affecting cadaveric organ donation intentions in the socio culture context of this region for effective awareness campaigns and policy measures.

**Objectives**

- 1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
- 2. To discover the impact of belief system on the intention of cadaveric organ donation in respondents.
- 3. To suggest suitable policy measures to promote cadaveric organ donation among the target population.

**Methodology**

Quantitative approach was used to study the impact of belief system on the intention of youth regarding cadaveric organ donation in Punjab, Pakistan. Employing multistage sampling technique, three public sector universities were randomly selected from the forty-three public sector universities in the province. Afterwards, 150 male and 150 female students from various degree programs were conveniently recruited for collecting data through a self-administered questionnaire. The respondents were informed about the objectives of the study and prior consent taken from them. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 21. Chi-square and Gamma tests were applied to find the relationship between belief system and cadaveric organ donation intention.

**Results and Discussions**

**Table-1 Univariate analysis**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	18-22	225	75.0
	23-27	64	21.3
	28-32	6	2.0
	Above 32	5	1.7
Gender	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Residential Area	Rural	86	28.7
	Urban	196	65.3
	Suburban	18	6.0
Religion	Islam	298	99.3
	Christianity	2	.7
Reason for organ donation	For saving humanity	252	84.0
	Empathy	42	14.0

	Monetary reward	6	2.0
<b>Religious permissibility of deceased organ donation</b>	Strongly Agree	23	7.7
	Agree	40	13.3
	Neutral	148	49.3
	Disagree	57	19.0
	Strongly Disagree	32	10.7
<b>Deceased organ donation being ethically good</b>	Strongly Agree	28	9.3
	Agree	53	17.7
	Neutral	129	43.0
	Disagree	65	21.7
	Strongly Disagree	25	8.3

According to the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, 75% of them belonged to the age group of 18-22 years. The study being focused on the youth perception, this age group was according to the requirements of this research study. The socio-demographic profile depicts that there was equal representation of males and females where 50% of respondents were males and 50% were females. The data also revealed that most of the respondents (65.3%) belonged to urban areas. As far as the religious affiliation is concerned, the data suggested that an overwhelming majority (99.3%) of respondents belonged to Islamic religious beliefs. The results indicated that a significant majority considered organ donation a noble act of saving human life. But, most of them (49%) had neutral opinion on the permissibility of cadaveric organ donation according to their religious beliefs. Similarly, majority (43%) were neutral in their opinion regarding deceased organ donation being ethically correct according to their religion. This trend in the data points to a very important hurdle in the donation of organs after death which is people’s lack of understanding and knowledge about the permissibility of cadaveric organ donation in their religion. Similar problem was identified by (Vathsala, 2004) who argued that although every religion approves the idea of deceased organ donation but due to the misconceptions in this regard among people, they do not give approval for cadaveric organ donation. A previous study by Krupic, Westin, Hagelberg, Sköldenberg, & Samuelsson, (2019), also concluded that although majority of the people think that they have enough knowledge of their religion while in reality there is an acute lack of knowledge about their religious beliefs which leads to misconceptions and eventual lack of actual organ donation.

**Table -2 Bivariate analysis**  
**Association Between Religious Support and Organ Donation Intention**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	139.093 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	103.478	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.189	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	300		

Table-3 Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal	by Gamma	.233	.075	3.015	.003
Ordinal					
N of Valid Cases		300			

The bivariate analysis revealed a weak yet positive association between favorable beliefs for cadaveric organ donation and willingness for cadaveric organ donation. This shows that the favorable perception regarding cadaveric organ donation in youth are positively connected with their organ donation intentions. The reason identified by this research for this weak association is that most of the young people are unsure about the acceptance of donating organs after death in their religion. Singh et al. (2020) reached the similar conclusion that lack of knowledge, attitudes and uncertainties regarding religious permissibility are some of the reasons that impact an individual’s organ donation decision

**Conclusion**

This study highlights the role of beliefs and people’s knowledge and understanding as a crucial aspect of decision-making process for people in the donation of their organs after death. Study found that despite recognizing organs donation as noble cause, a large proportion of the population remained neutral its religious permissibility reflecting a critical gap in knowledge and understanding. The findings suggest that lack of clarity and misconception about the religious beliefs are major barriers to the cadaveric organ donations. A comprehensive awareness program comprising of the religious scholars, and the educational institutions is essential to dispel the myths and promote informed decisions of cadaveric organs donation in the region.

**Recommendations**

Based on the results of this research, it is suggested that government should arrange public awareness campaigns on the importance of deceased organ donation. The religious scholars of the country should be included in these campaigns to clarify the ethical stance of different religions practiced in the country. Every university should conduct at least one seminar every year on the significance, and awareness regarding the organ donations.

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