SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mediating role of religious orientation and moral character for the relationship between parent and peer attachment and delinquency

Aasma Munir* and Jamil A. Malik

Abstract: Juvenile delinquency is a worldwide phenomenon. Magnitude of juvenile delinquency has evoked interest of researchers in scientific and empirical studies on causes, prevention/control, and rehabilitation of juvenile delinquency. The present study therefore proposes and examines a path model to explain delinquency by addressing the role of parents and peers attachment in determination of religious orientation leading to moral character. The objective was to develop an understanding of the underlying mechanism of protective factors including interpersonal relations, and religious orientation in shaping morality against an undesired social behavior. Adolescents (N = 706) with mean age of 17.01 (sd = 0.98) years reported their attachment to parents and peers, religious orientation, moral character, and delinquency on self-report measures. Results showed that both parent and peer attachments are negatively related to delinquency. Extrinsic religious orientation is positively whereas moral character is negatively related to delinquency. Although extrinsic religious orientation mediated the relationship between both (parent and peer) attachment and delinquency yet the mediation was stronger for peer attachment than parent attachment and delinquency. Concluding the present research, secure parent attachment is more related to intrinsic religious orientation which further played a role in development of moral character and finally resulting in a decrease in delinquency. Further it is concluded that moral character is an important mediator to counter the negative effect of extrinsic religious orientation on delinquency.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Adolescents are lifeline for the survival and growth of any community and hence Juvenile delinquency remained an area of great significance for policymakers, social scientists, and public and private social organizations. Societies have realized the magnitude of juvenile delinquency and shown deep interest in scientific and empirical studies to unveil the causes, prevention/control, and rehabilitation of delinquency. The present study is designed to explore the underlying mechanism of relationship between parent and peer attachment, intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation, and morality to understand delinquency. Results showed that secure parent attachment is strongly related to intrinsic religious orientation than extrinsic religious orientation which further played a role in development of moral character and finally resulting in a decrease in delinquency. Further it is concluded that moral character is an important mediator to counter the negative effect of extrinsic religious orientation on delinquency.

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than extrinsic religious orientation which is further related to an increase in moral character that further resulted in a significant decrease in delinquency. For peer attachment both dimensions of religious orientation played similar role and strengthen the moral character resulting in a decrease in delinquency. The study will be useful for the policymakers, law enforcing agencies and civil society.

**Subjects:** General Psychology; Social Psychology; Educational Psychology

**Keywords:** parent and peer attachment; moral character; religious orientation; delinquency; mediation

1. **Introduction**

The significance of the research on juvenile delinquency is undeniable mainly due to its ever increasing prevalence. Understanding the complex phenomena of juvenile delinquency is difficult due to varying role of social, cultural, developmental, and legal factors involving families, social institutions, law enforcement agencies, media, and judiciary (Panezai et al., 2019). Children are considered the important asset for the futuristic socio-economic development of any country. Policies and plans are formulated and executed for their social upbringing and to make them socially advantageous. However, many societies fail to provide the constructive social environment. This failure increases the risk for children to get indulged in criminal activities. Their criminal activities are literally termed as “juvenile delinquency”. Juvenile delinquency is conceived differently due to the differences in cultural contexts and laws of the country and hence it has been defined differently in the literature. According to Ukris (2004), “Juvenile delinquency refers to the behavior of non-adults which violates the rules and regulations set by the government or society”. For understanding juvenile delinquency, it is important to define juvenile. Globally, there is no consensus over the definition of juvenile. In the context of Pakistan, juvenile is defined as the “child” who is below 18 years at the time of committing an offense (Ministry of Law Justice and Human Rights Pakistan, 2000). Based on the definitions given above, it can simply be concluded that any crime against the law committed by children under 18 years old may be categorized as juvenile delinquency. These criminal acts can range from less severe behaviors to more severe crime such as stealing, robbery, substance abuse, rape, and weapon possession. The prevalence of juvenile delinquency in Pakistan is reaching epic proportion with neither the law nor other people associated with it willing to understand the continual and serious dangers being rendered to the health, social and moral development of these children. What makes the situation more critical is that out of Pakistan’s population of 165 million almost half or 49% are under the age of 18 years while 22% are adolescents (10–18 years). According to estimates, 3 million children in Pakistan are engaged in child labor and the count continues to go up every year. It is sad that Pakistan, or other third world countries for that matter, is not using research to understand the underline causes of delinquency.

Several theories have explained the phenomenon of delinquency and the associated factors. Most of the theories explain the effects of juveniles’ personal characteristics, physical and psychological conditions, and the effect of family and environmental factors upon their delinquent behavior. Strain theories examine the effect of social structure, and attempt to determine the forces that drive people to commit a crime (Agniew, 2013). In his review, Eker (2010) showed that social disorganization theory focuses on macro-level variables such as groups, communities, and community structures and minimizes individual differences, such as psychological and biological traits. This approach argues that the cause of crime is external as social forces may affect a person’s engagement in crime (Agniew, 2013). Biosocial theory was proposed by Du (2019) suggesting that delinquent behavior is learned in interaction with another person, especially intimates. Social Control Theory stated that “delinquent acts result when an individual’s bond to the society is weak or broken” (Hirschi, 1969). The theory further proposes that the strong social bounds and moral norms prohibit individuals to engage in anti-social or criminal activities. Adolescents who give more importance to these social norms and values are less likely to involve in delinquent behaviors (Hirschi, 1969). They conform to the rules and believe that the rules are right. Delinquency occurs because socialization is incomplete or faulty. Research studies have
explored the causal factors of juvenile delinquency. One of the main factors that become a concern for the rising of juvenile delinquency is the attachment with family and friend (Hoeve et al., 2012).

Attachment is defined as the emotional association with someone that survives beyond space and time (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Attachment with primary caregivers is an inborn quality of human being (Ainsworth et al., 2015). In later periods of life, attachment shifts from parental figures to others figures such as peers (Hoeve et al., 2012). Peer attachment is an imperious part of attachment as the support, encouragement, care, and attention from the peers help to face challenges and to experience life in a better way. However, adolescents may involve in anti-social behaviors if they are attached to delinquent peers (Fosco et al., 2012). Children who experience secure attachment with the caregivers and peers show positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem, better academic achievement, better emotional regulation and higher social competence (Groh et al., 2014). In contrast, children who experience insecure attachment with their caregivers and friends are more likely to develop negative outcome such as behavioral problems and delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2012). An increasing amount of research has investigated the role of attachment in adolescents’ tendency to indulge in delinquent behaviors (Davies & Davis, 2013). The studies revealed that insecure attachment with family and friend is one of the leading interpersonal factors for development of juvenile delinquency in adolescents (Brazelton, 2018; Choon et al., 2013).

Empirical studies have also showed the positive role of religion in decreasing delinquent behaviors. Furthermore, studies have reported relationship between the pro-social behaviors and the religiosity. Development of adolescents’ religious perspective and identities is also explained by attachment theory. Adolescence is known as a crucial period for developing personal religious identity along with development of social and intrapersonal relations (Crone & Dahl, 2012). During this period of life, adolescents are involved in exploring knowledge about their religion and show commitment to religious duties (Hardy et al., 2012). It is anticipated that parents play a role of socializing agent and transfer their own norms, rules, regulation and moral values into their children (Baier & Wright, 2001). Consequently, adolescents develop their religious views under the supervision of their parents, thus reducing the possibility of their involvement in criminal behaviors (Landor et al., 2011). Findings of a research study mentioned that the spirituality of parents and youths is significantly related to a decrease in the delinquent behaviors among youth in Thailand (Chamratrithirong et al., 2010).

Religious orientation is an individual perspective on the position of religion in his life, which determines the pattern of individual relationship with religion. Allport and Ross (1967) divide religious orientation into two typologies, extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic religious oriented individuals tend to use religion in the framework of usability. They are driven by what they can get out of religion. Religion is useful to support the self-confidence, improve the status, defend against the reality or give sanction to a way of life. The intrinsically religious oriented show internalized motivation in religion. Religion is more focused on the interests that organize and mobilize the entire life activity. They try to internalize and follow on what has been taught by their religion.

Adolescents with insecure attachment patterns independently strive to build their own identity and personal autonomy (Van Petegem et al., 2013). Configuring an individual identity that is distinct from their parents often pushes adolescents to rebel and insurgent against their parental values (Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985). These adolescents show compliance with religious duties under the influence of parents, peers and society and less because of a personal obligation (Cohen-Malayev et al., 2014). Based on this line of reasoning, it is proposed that secure parent attachment may endorse intrinsic religious orientation and may increase children’s dedication to religious values and beliefs to suppress the children’s delinquent tendencies.

Religion teaches moral development and responsible pro-social behavior hence, religiosity is expected as a significant directive of morality (Landor et al., 2011). Nevertheless, research constantly showed that religiosity has significant positive influence on moral beliefs (Bloom, 2012; Galen, 2012).
On the other side, delinquency research also proposes strong relation between morality and delinquency (Ishoy, 2017). It is therefore hypothesized that religiosity decreases engagement in delinquent behaviors by raising standards of morality. Mears et al. (1998) drew a comprehensible sketch of the significance of morality in preventing delinquency and proposed a strong connection between morality, delinquency and religiosity. It is not astonishing that research frequently demonstrated the mediating role of morality between religiosity and delinquency (Gault-Sherman & Draper, 2012; Ishoy, 2017). For example, Khoury-Kassabri et al. (2015) examined the relation of both parent and child religiosity on delinquency. The researchers described that religious adolescents can better understand the moral aspect behind the wrongfulness of undesirable acts than non-religious adolescents. As a consequence, their beliefs abridged their participation in delinquent and anti-social behaviors. The findings of the study also revealed the significant indirect path from adolescents’ religiosity to delinquent peer associations through moral beliefs (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2015). A study elaborated that strong moral beliefs of religious youth tend to be less likely to relate with delinquent peers, which in turn prohibit them to involve in delinquent behavior (Chamratrithirong et al., 2013).

Summarizing the above described literature, it is argued that attachment with family and friends is one of the leading interpersonal factors for increasing juvenile delinquency in adolescents (Choon et al., 2013; Hoeve et al., 2012). Studies also showed that parent and peer attachment is negatively associated with delinquency and presented that secure attachment is a defensive or protective factor accountable to a decrease in criminal tendencies in adolescents (Brazelton, 2018; Davies & Davis, 2013). Studies have empirically established this relationship but the underlying mechanism between attachment and adolescents’ delinquent tendencies is not well elaborated. A direct link between parent and peer attachment, and delinquency is often found in theory and preceding empirical literature (Hoeve et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this relationship might be mediated by other related factors. For example, it has been proposed that there are other motivational, attitudinal, religious, and social factors through which parent and peer attachment may affect the delinquency (Sjømons et al., 2004). At current, however, there have been few investigations exploring possible mediating mechanisms (Dane et al., 2018; De Vries et al., 2016). Hence, the present study is designed to investigate the potential mediators including religious orientation and moral character for the relationship between parent and peer attachment and adolescents’ delinquency.

2. The present study
On the basis of the theoretical background and empirical literature, it is hypothesized that parent and peer attachment both are negatively related to delinquency. Parent attachment is strongly related to intrinsic religious orientation than extrinsic religious orientation. Further both dimensions of religious orientation mediate the relationship between attachment and morality in explaining potential mechanisms of indirect relationship between parent and peer attachment and delinquency. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual meditational model of the study elaborating the mechanism of indirect relationships between attachment and delinquency through religious orientation followed by morality.

3. Method

3.1. Research design
A quantitative research with cross-sectional research design was conducted in Pakistan with purpose to explore the relationship among parent and peer attachment, religious orientation, morality, and delinquency. Purposive convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data. Participant’s age range (15–19 years) was taken as inclusion criterion.

3.2. Participants
A total of 706 adolescents participated in the study from different cities of Pakistan (i.e., Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Rahim yar khan, and Vehari). The sample consisted 45% male, and 55% female with the mean age of 17.01 (SD = 0.98) years. Adolescent belonging to combine family system constituted 39.2% and 61.8% belonged to nuclear family system. A total of 45%
adolescents studied in public institutions and 55% were enrolled in private institutes/colleges. By residence, an equal number of adolescents were living in each category (i.e., 50% urban and 50% rural). GPower was used to conduct post hoc power analysis to estimate the suitability of the sample for testing inferences of the study. F test for the “linear multiple regression: Fixed model, $R^2$ deviation from zero” was used. To compute post-hoc achieved power, a probability error was set to 0.05, and with five predictors in the model the effect size was set to low, i.e., 0.02 using the most conservative criteria. The resulting post-hoc power estimation showed power ($1 - \beta$ error probability) = 0.84 suggesting that the sample has substantial power even to detect a low effect.

3.3. Material

3.3.1. Self-report delinquency scale
The delinquent tendencies are measured by Self-report Delinquency Scale (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008). This instrument was designed to measure the delinquent behavior exhibited by adolescents. Self-reported delinquency scale consists of 27 items. Items are presented using Likert type response categories with “never” = 0, “once” = 1, “2–4 times” = 2, “5–10 times” = 3, and “more than 10 times” = 4. Example item of the scale includes “I used to travel by bus or train without fare”. Items are summed to get a delinquency score with high scores on self-reported scale (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008) showing high delinquent tendencies in adolescents. The reliability of the scale was reported as $\alpha = .94$ (Naqvi & Kamal, 2013).

3.3.2. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment Revised (IPPA-R)
The study used the revised version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, i.e., IPPA-R by Gullone and Robinson (2005). Authors introduced two parallel versions of the inventory, one for parent and the other for peers. Parent form is comprised of 28 items and peer form consists of 25 items. Responses are collated on a three point Likert type scale with “always true” = 1, “sometimes true” = 2, “never true” = 3. Both parent and peer forms have two subscales, namely, trust-communication, and alienation. The items on the alienation scale are reverse scored to get a total score representing secure attachment on the respective form. High scores respective forms of IPPA-R indicate secure attachment with parent and peers. Example item for parent form includes “My parents can tell when I’m upset about something” and for peer form include “I like to get my friends’ opinions on things I’m worried about”. Cronbach’s alpha reported for parent form is $\alpha = .93$ and peer form is $\alpha = .86$ (Gullone & Robinson, 2005).

3.3.3. Religious orientation scale
Intrinsic and Extrinsic religious orientation is measured by the Religious Orientation Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). It is a 14 items self-report Likert type scale with five response options, ranging
from “strongly disagree” = 1 to the “strongly agree” = 5. Religious Orientation Scale comprises of two subscales, intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. Example item of intrinsic dimension includes “I enjoy reading about my religion” and example item for extrinsic dimension include “I visit worship places because it helps me to make friends”. Translation and cultural validation of the Religious Orientation Scale was conducted by Khan et al. (2016) on Pakistani population and they provided sound psychometric properties of this scale. Their study reported good internal consistency for both dimension with intrinsic ($\alpha = .89$) and extrinsic ($\alpha = .74$).

3.3.4. Moral Character Scale (MCS)

Morality was measured using the Moral Character Scale developed by Munir et al. (2019). This instrument is based on the theory of Rest (1984). Moral Character Scale is a self-rated scale with 32 items. Responses are collected on Likert type scale with four options, ranging from “strongly disagree” = 1 to the “strongly agree” = 4. MCS has five subscales and all items are summed to get a total score representing moral character. Higher scores on the MCS show higher levels of morality. Example item of MCS includes “I do whatever is right even when others are against it”. The scale has good internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha = .84$ (Munir et al., 2019).

3.3.5. Procedure

Following the ethical considerations, permission was taken from student’s institutional heads/principles, and informed consent was taken from students. Parents of the students below 18 years of age were contacted to seek their consent for participation of their child in the study. The informed consent consisted of several statements for a clear description of the objectives of the present research. Further, it was confirmed that the information would be kept confidential. All the data will be used only for research purposes. Finally, after taking informed consent from the students, the questionnaires were distributed to students in lecture halls in their leisure time either before or after their classes.

4. Results

4.1. Primarily analysis

Before proceeding to results, appropriateness of the data was checked. The normality assumption was sustained by values of skewness and kurtosis ranged from $+2$ to $-2$ except delinquency. Means and standard deviations were computed (Table 1). Pearson correlation was calculated among all studies variables. Most bivariate correlations (see Table 2) among study variables were small to moderate but in expected direction. Delinquency was significantly negatively correlated with moral character ($r = -.14 \ p = .000$) and parent ($r = -.19 \ p = .000$) and peer attachment ($r = -.15 \ p = .000$). Both dimensions intrinsic ($r = .024 \ p = .000$) and extrinsic ($r = .26 \ p = .000$) religious orientation found to be positively correlated with moral character. The proposed conceptual model was tested using structural equation modeling in AMOS version 23. The result showed a good fit of the model to the data with a non-significant $\chi^2$ (df) = 10.08 (5), $p = .07$. Additionally, all other indices of model fit, i.e.,, NFI = .98, CFI & IFI = .98, TLI = .93, and RMSEA = .038 (PClose = .68) also supported good fit with. Only four parameters in the model appeared to be non-significant. These parameters were constrained to zero resulting in an improvement of model to data with fit indices $\chi^2$ (df) = 14.26 (9), $p = .11$, NFI = .97, CFI & IFI = .99, TLI = .96, and RMSEA = .029 (PClose = .89). Given that we wanted to compare the mediating role of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation for each predictor (i.e., parents and peers attachment). The SEM results from AMOS showed one indirect for all mediators between a predictor and outcome. Hence, to estimate indirect effect on specific mediation paths Process Macro was used for further analysis.

4.2. Mediation analysis

The proposed conceptual path model was empirically tested to specific indirect effects. Analyses were performed using the PROCESS version (3.3) in SPSS developed by Hayes (2017). Bootstrap analyses of indirect effects with 10,000 bootstrap samples and bias-corrected confidence intervals
| Measures          | Female | Male  |
|-------------------|--------|-------|
|                   | Mean   | S.D   | Skew | Kurt | Mean   | S.D   | Skew | Kurt |
| Intrinsic RO      | 30.97  | 2.21  | -0.50| 0.11 | 32.15  | 2.62  | -0.89| 0.09 |
| Extrinsic RO      | 21.17  | 4.70  | -0.55| 0.23 | 24.87  | 4.67  | -0.89| 0.25 |
| Delinquency       | 32.61  | 2.58  | 2.11 | 9.92 | 33.48  | 5.54  | 1.28 | 1.30 |
| Moral character   | 70.39  | 10.04 | -0.51| 1.01 | 77.28  | 13.21 | -1.26| 2.05 |
| Parent attachment | 60.43  | 6.13  | -0.95| 1.08 | 61.61  | 6.26  | -1.30| 1.71 |
| Peer attachment   | 53.82  | 8.02  | -0.57| -0.31| 56.17  | 7.31  | -1.02| 1.11 |

RO: Religious Orientation
| # | 1. Parent attachment | 2. Peer attachment | 3. Intrinsic RO | 4. Extrinsic RO | 5. Delinquency | 6. Moral character |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | - | 4.7*** | -19*** | -15*** | 26*** | 0.79 |
| 2 | 0.05 | - | 19*** | -15*** | 24*** | 0.68 |
| 3 | - | 1.6*** | - | 0.03 | 0.26*** | 0.87 |
| 4 | 0.26*** | - | - | - | 0.90 | 0.86 |
| 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

***p<0.001. RO-Religious Orientation.
at 95% were employed. Two parallel models were investigated by employing model 80 of macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2017, p. 606). The model allows testing of hypothesis involving one predictor (Parent attachment/Peer attachment) leading to two parallel mediators (Intrinsic, and Extrinsic religious orientation) followed by one serial mediator (Moral character) to predict one outcome (Delinquency).

The first mediational model was performed using parent attachment as an independent variable followed by level-1 mediators including intrinsic religious orientation, and extrinsic religious orientation, leading to level-2 mediator moral character, resulting in a decline of delinquency. The model consisted of two specific serial mediations (a.) parent attachment → intrinsic religious orientation → moral character → delinquency, and (b.) parent attachment → extrinsic religious orientation → moral character → delinquency. The model is presented in Figure 2.

The second analysis was performed with peer attachment as an independent variable followed by level-1 mediators including intrinsic religious orientation, and extrinsic religious orientation, leading to level-2 mediator moral character resulting in a decrease in delinquency. The model consisted of two independent serial mediations (a.) peer attachment → intrinsic religious orientation → moral character → delinquency, and (b.) peer attachment → extrinsic religious orientation → moral character → delinquency. The model is presented in Figure 3.

Results showed that parent attachment is positively related to intrinsic religious orientation ($B = 0.10, p = .000$), and moral character ($B = 0.22, p = .006$) and negatively related to delinquency ($B = -0.26, p = 000$). Parent attachment also has significant and positive association with extrinsic religious orientation ($B = .07, p = .05$). As proposed in conceptual model, extrinsic religious orientation is positively related to delinquency ($B = 0.18, p = .02$), and moral character ($B = 0.54, p = .000$). Moral character ($B = -0.13, p = .000$) is negatively related to delinquency (Table 3).
order to investigate the significance of specific mediated paths between parent attachment and delinquency, review of indirect effect showed that parent attachment is indirectly linked with delinquency through extrinsic religious orientation ($B = .01$, $95\% CI = .01, .04$).

Analysis of second part of the model consisting of peer attachment, intrinsic religious orientation, extrinsic religious orientation, moral character, and delinquency showed that peer attachment is positively related to intrinsic religious orientation ($B = 0.08$, $p = .000$), extrinsic religious orientation ($B = 0.10$, $p = .001$) and moral character ($B = 0.38$, $p = .000$), and negatively related to delinquency ($B = -0.17$, $p = .003$). Extrinsic religious orientation has significant positive association with delinquency ($B = 0.17$, $p = .04$), and moral character ($B = 0.51$, $p < .000$). In order to determine the significance of specific mediated paths between peer attachment and delinquency, review of indirect results showed that peer attachment is indirectly linked with delinquency through extrinsic religious orientation ($B = .02$, $95\% CI = .01, .04$).

Summarizing the results for both the mediational models, parent attachment is strongly related to intrinsic religious orientation in comparison to extrinsic religious orientation. But for peer attachment, both dimension of religious orientation has a similar relation with attachment. Hence, it may be concluded that religiosity (either intrinsic or extrinsic) is an important mediator. Furthermore, both dimensions of religious orientation are positively related to moral character. Contrary to that direct link between extrinsic religious orientation and delinquency is positive and significant. It means that if adolescents’ motivation to religious duties is extrinsic then they are at an increased risk to develop delinquent behaviors. Moral character as a mediator played a very important role to counter the negative role of extrinsic religious orientation for delinquency. It is concluded that extrinsic motivation to religious orientation decreases delinquency if adolescents use their extrinsic religious motivation to improve moral character.

5. Discussion
The study was designed to examine the underlying mechanism of relationships among parent and peer attachment, religious orientation, moral character, and delinquency. Results of the present
study supported a number of hypotheses regarding direct relationship but hypotheses regarding mediation were partially supported. Direct relationship of parent and peer attachment with delinquency, intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation with delinquency, and morality with delinquency are confirmed by this study. Further, as was hypothesized, intrinsic religious orientation was found strongly related to parent attachment than extrinsic religious orientation. Results also supported our assumption showing that extrinsic religious orientation is positively related to delinquency. Finally, mediating role of extrinsic religious orientation for the relationship between parent and peer attachment and delinquency is also confirmed in our results.

Adolescent is a crucial period related to developing personal identity, autonomy and religious beliefs (Feldman & Brown, 1993; Good & Willoughby, 2008). The negative association of parent attachment with delinquency and positive association with moral character confirmed our hypothesis for the role of attachment. It showed that adolescents who are more attached to their parent acquire a higher level of morality and that they are less likely to be involved in delinquent behaviors. These findings are also consistent with preceding literature (Laird, 2011; Sjmons et al., 2004). Parents who are more attached to their children are more aware of their children's daily activities and their friends. This reduces the chances of the adolescents to be involved in delinquent behaviors as well as in meeting up with delinquent friends. Strongly and securely attached parents are also able to intervene without creating conflicts, whenever they suspect their children are misbehaving or mixing up with the wrong group of friends which in turn decreases the chances to get indulge in delinquency (Ingram et al., 2007; Warr, 2007). Furthermore, result confirmed our assumption showing that parent attachment has a stronger impact on intrinsic religious orientation compared to extrinsic religious orientation. Earlier literature also suggests that internalization of adolescents’ religious beliefs is influenced by their attachment to their parents. Strong parental attachment with adolescents motivates them to interact with religion intrinsically (Kim-Spoon et al., 2012). Parents support and assist their children in establishing control over their behaviors and impulsive tendencies through preaching of religious beliefs (Landor et al., 2011). Researches also elaborated this relationship by presenting parents as socializing agents who transform their own values and norms into their children (Boier & Wright, 2001). With the passage of time, children internalized these norms and values which in turn help them to avoid antisocial and delinquent behaviors (Landor et al., 2011).

Peer attachment also served as a significant positive predictor of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation yet in contradiction to our assumption the effect of peer attachment didn't substantially differed. According to Good and Willoughby (2008), adolescence is a critical period for shaping personal religious involvement with the gradual development of intrapersonal, cognitive, and neurological abilities. During this critical phase of life, children are more likely to explore religious knowledge, be vulnerable to religious values, and make commitments to religious beliefs (Good & Willoughby, 2008). Hence, it is concluded that adolescents’ internalization and externalization of religiosity is equally influenced by peer attachment (Agnew, 1991; Desmond et al., 2008; Judy & Nelson, 2000).

With respect to hypothesized assumption of mediation by religious orientation, results also supported mediation by extrinsic religious orientation for the effect of both parent and peer attachment on delinquency. The mediation analysis showed that adolescents’ attachment to their parents also increased extrinsic religious orientation, which further led to delinquency. Although literature suggested parents influence in intrinsic motivation to religion but in patriarchal society an alternate explanation is equally justifiable. Adolescents’ attachment to parents is also dependent on their compliance toward their parents and hence it is not surprising that adolescents with increased attachment to parents are more likely to perform religious duties to show compliance and gain acceptance from their parents. Extrinsic religious orientation is defined as extrinsically motivated people tend to adopt religious duties for their own ends and benefits for, e.g., as a source of support and safety, a way of socialization, to sustain one’s religious status and social standing (Kurpis et al., 2008).
Extrinsic religious orientation also mediated the relationship between peer attachment and delinquency. This showed that adolescents who are more attached to their peers are more likely to show extrinsic motivation to religious duties (might be due to peer pressure) which in turn increases the possibility to indulge in delinquent behaviors. According to Ingram et al. (2007), peers are strongly related to delinquency where delinquent peers increased the involvement of adolescents in delinquent behaviors. Peers are also one of the most important social bonds during adolescence. Adolescents are more likely to involve in delinquent behaviors when they are strongly attached to their peers especially if their peers are also involved in delinquency (Daigle et al., 2007; Ingram et al., 2007). Although it was suggested that parent attachment will strengthen adolescent moral character through religious orientation that will further lead to decrease in adolescents’ delinquency. Findings of the present study did not support the role of moral character as the hypothesized serial mediator for both parent and peer attachment, and delinquency yet it appeared to be a parallel mediator along with intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. This partial acceptance for the mediating role of moral character has ample support from the earlier literature. For instance, research findings consistently showed strong relationship between morality and delinquency (Hannon et al., 2001; Kosterman et al., 2004; Mears et al., 1998). Researchers have also evidenced strong association between religiosity, morality, and delinquency (Johnson et al., 2001; Sjoms et al., 2004). It is evidenced that moral character is a parallel mediator along with religious orientation in determining delinquency among adolescents.

6. Limitations and future directions
The present study has a number of limitations and hence a careful generalization of the findings is required. First, the study was cross-sectional that limited conclusion regarding causality. A longitudinal design is required to understand the true causal nature of the relationship among the study variables. Secondly, although study included a sizeable sample of adolescents however the sample didn’t include a national level representation for a wider generalizability. The findings of a study may vary by changing merely the measurement tools and it is suggested that our findings shall be confirmed using other measurement tools. Further, data were collected only from the adolescents having a potential to increase common method bias and effecting results. To address this limitation, it is recommended to design multi-informants study by including other stakeholders such as parents and peers. Finally, the meditational role of religious orientation and morality is partially confirmed in this study, it is recommended that the findings shall be replicated in different cultures and societies.

7. Implications
From the theoretical point of view, present study will enrich the preceding literature as the findings of the present study address several gaps in literature and provide considerable new information to understand and unveil the phenomenon of delinquency. Furthermore, the findings of the current study also have application from a pragmatic perspective. Therapists, family counselors, and other professionals are most effective when they respect and incorporate the value systems of their clients. Therefore, it is important for these professionals to be aware of attachment patterns, religious and moral values in the lives of their clients who seek help dealing with issues associated with delinquency. Finally, the findings of the present study also important for policymakers, social scientists, as well as public and private social organizations to understand juvenile delinquency and its underlying mechanism.

8. Conclusion
The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between parent attachment and delinquency and to explore the role of religious orientation and moral character as potential mediators for the relationship between parent attachment and delinquency. Our research contributes to the literature in several ways. It unveils the underlying mechanism for the relationship between parent and peer attachment and delinquency through moral character by addressing the differential role of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. It is concluded that parent and peer attachment has a differential role in determination of moral character through intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. Further, it is concluded that moral character is an important mediator to counter the negative effect of extrinsic religious orientation on delinquency. Finally, moral character is a parallel mediator along with religious orientation in determining delinquency among adolescents.
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