

## **Names and Behavior: Case of the Name “Muhammad”**

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### **Abstract**

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Names have great impact on the personality and behavioral traits of a person. Muslims mostly name their children (male) on the names of Prophets (Peace be upon All) and the devoted Companions (May Allah be Pleased with All) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him). The name of the last Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” is used with most of the names e.g. Muhammad Abu Bakar, Muhammad Umer, Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Bilal, Muhammad Junaid, Muhammad Ahmed, etc. Very rare research has been done on the impact of name on one’s personality and behavior. Furthermore, no research has been carried out specifically by considering the name “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” which is the world’s most popular name. This research is aimed at exploring the impact of the name “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” on one’s personality.

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**Keywords:** Muhammad, Name, Behavior, Personality, Theory of Planned Behavior.

### **Introduction**

Names do have the power to make a child's identity and self-esteem and it also has impact on how he has been treated and seen by other people (Miller & Harrison, 2007). In western countries, just like music, clothes and hairstyles names come and go in fashion cycle. An example in this context can be “popular girl names from 1912 Helen, Mary, Margaret, Dorothy, and Ruth were ranked in the top 40 names in the year 2010”

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When the musical play, Peter Pan got much popularity in the 1950's the name Wendy became very popular, and similarly, Brittany became very popular in the late 1990's as well as in early 2000's when the pop star Britney Spears got very famous (Dubner & Levitt, 2012).

While in countries, having deep religious and cultural values like Pakistan, a newborn is usually named by close relatives like grandparents, aunts and uncles with the consent of the parents. While naming their child parents wish to select a name that is beautiful inside and out (Madinat-ul-ilmiyah, 2014).

Research suggests that people are drawn to, people, places and things unconsciously that sound like their own names. Psychologists call this "implicit egotism" (Hixon, 2006). Major life decisions are influenced by implicit egotism. Studies have shown that people prefer to live in places whose names resemble their own last name, and also that people disproportionately select careers whose labels resemble their own names (Pelham, Mirenberg, & Jones, 2002). Study on "name letter effect" shows that people like the letters that appear in their own names more than the other letters that do not (Kitayama & Karasawa, 1997).

### **Impact of Names**

When the name is the only thing we know about a person in that case it has much influence but when the picture of the person is added in that case the influence of the name disappears. Similarly when information about person's personality and ability is added, the effect of the name drops to least importance (Tierney, 2008).

A person's career success can be influenced by their name's racial identity and names which have causal impacts on adult life outcomes (Levitt & Fryer, 2004). Some names immediately arouse images of success, others of popularity or kindness. Name is a part of impression package; and children who are given bizarre names represent the foolishness of parents (Mehrabian, 2002).

### **Traditional and Fad Names**

Commonly, traditional name is to name a son after the father and to use "Jr." as part of the son's name.

But there are practical problems in differentiating father and son, especially if both are prominent; the actual difficulty lies in the son's feeling of sharing an identity with someone else ( Deluzain, 1996).

A naming pattern which reflects the personalities of the parents is when parents use popular and fashionable names, i.e. fad names. Parents who select fad names for their children may be because of social pressure to conform what the general culture says is acceptable, and may be because of lack of confidence in their own judgment, or simply because of lack of originality.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Self-Esteem**

An individual's background can be judged by his accent and the type of clothes he wear, similar in that sense the name of an individual also predicts about that person's background. The analysis of names; combinations of letters, complexity of names and any added factors, then the use a numerical investigation to sort out the likelihood that the name under contemplation belongs to someone of low socioeconomic status or high. Poorly educated people give their children, names from a linguistic perspective and sometimes those kids end up treated in a different manner than other children (Figlio, 2005).

Research has also shown a strong link between high and low self-esteem and liking or disliking of a person for his or her name. The relationship between self-esteem and a person's liking for his or her name is very strong, so much that whenever people want to measure self-confidence in a more refined way it can be done with the name letter task. People who don't like their own name and cares too much about what other people think in that case if their name is odd or unlikeable then they will not to be very well attuned (Twenge, 1998).

### **Unusual vs. Common Names**

There are two types of parents when it comes to picking names for their children. There is one category of parents who want an unusual name for their child and the other category is of those who want a common name for their child. If you choose between a common, relatively likeable name and one that is really odd, that definitely could have an impact.

Parents who want their kid to be unique and to stand out in fields of life give their child an unusual name to become and be prominent (Fabian, 2014).

Research shows that there are certain names that are considered more desirable and associate positive feelings in some cultures as compared to some other names. In light of the significant link between names and self-concept, researchers have also found relationships between names and the propensity toward mental illness. In four separate studies that were conducted over a twenty-year period, researchers found decided tendencies toward psychosis and neurosis among people with unusual and uncommon first names (Hartman, 1968)(Ellis, 1954)(Savage & Wells, 1948). Name could represent a mark of cultural tradition, or a sign of religious faith (Dussart, 1998). More important, a person's name works as a unique social symbol representing an individual's identity (Dion, 1983).

### **Names and Behavior**

One of the earliest researches between the relationship of names and the behavior was conducted in Africa. Which concluded that all the people working were having the believe that the behavior of the person as well as the character traits of the person is affected by the day of the week on which he was born, throughout his life (Johoda, 1954).(Garwood, 1976) In his research equated academic achievement of a group of boys having desirable names with the group of boys having undesirable names, he concluded that the group of boys having the desirable names were having two times high scores as comparison with the other group of boys.

Louisa Seraydarian and Thomas Busse followed his study and they also established similar relation between desirable names and achievement in the school that Garwood found; they took further step and find out a positive relationship between IQ and desirable names (Louisa & Busse, 1978). Similar to hair color, body shape and physical attractiveness, names are also to some extent stereotyped. Children performance in the schools is influenced by the names as well as the teacher's reactions to the name stereotypes (Harari, Herbert, & Mcdavid, 1973). There is an assumption that the name of individual determines functionally differentiation and uniqueness from world to entities(Anti-functionalism, 2013).

People feel positive associations about themselves when positive things or objects are associated with them. People maintain their positive associations by name letters, numbers, birthdays, believes and judgments (Jones & John , 2002).

## Literature Review

There is effect of names across various regions and cultures. This effect is discussed by giving the example of Chinese and American businessmen misunderstanding which arose due to their names (Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Many African societies have meaningful names and these names are working as their primary labels (Suzman, 1994).

Selection of proper names is referring to some local places such that the names of rivers, towns, communities showing there belongingness to these places (Allerton, 1996). Model of face naming introduce by Burton and Bruce (1992) discuss that there is *fan effect* of naming of famous people. Personal relationships are being cited on the basis of individuality, uniqueness and arbitrariness and models of face naming ( Gassi, Calder, Valentine, & Brédart, 1995)

Burton and Bruce discuss IAC model (Interactive activation and competition) for naming and discuss that there are empirical effects of name recognition. Known names are read faster than unknown; common names read faster than rare ones; rare names are recognized faster than common ones (Brennen, 2011). On the basis of visual or similarity in names of individuals, we assume that these people have similarities in there characteristics. There is more versatility in a person's names as compare to other words which are associated to his name ( Griffin, 2010).

Names occupy a great place in Islam, and, Muslims take special care while selecting names of their children and unlike the western trend, a Muslim child is named after his/her father. While discussing about names, "Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him)" said "You will be called on the Day of Resurrection by your names and the names of your fathers, so choose good names for yourselves". Allah also suggests in The Holy Quran that people should be named after their father's names (Al\_Quran; 33:5). Based upon such guidelines, a convert to Islam, cannot change his father's name into an Islamic name, i.e. if father name is John; then Muslims can never replace this name with "Muhammad", "Ali" or any other Islamic name.

In Christianity, a naming ceremony for a newly born child is organized in which people gather and give meaningful name to the child. Every Christian name reflects certain meaning, and a naming ceremony is a method used by Christians to express good hope for the child who has been born or about to be born. It is said in the Bible Isaiah 9 (p.1072) that "the blind will see; the deaf will hear; the dead will live again, because the promised Messiah, was given great name & title in the Old Covenant" (Naming The Child , 2008).

### Statement of the Problem

One Hundred and Fifty (150) Million People around the world are named "Muhammad" making it the world's most popular name (Press tv, 2013)(Fisher, 2014)(Doyle, 2010)(Moss, 2007)( Acim, 2012).

<b>Popular Name "Muhammad" in different Countries/Regions of the world.</b>		
<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Country/Region</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1	Oslo, Norway	( Harding, 2014), (World Bulletin, 2014)
2	England and Wales	(Dugan, 2014), (Russell, 2013), (Y Net News, 2010)
3	Australia	(Wood, 2013)
4	Middle East and North	(Fisher M. , 2014)
5	U.A.E	(Salem, 2010)
6	France and Belgium	( Paterson, 2013)

### Research Questions

1. What are the different effects of names on people?
2. What are the reasons due to which the name "Muhammad" is the most popular in the world?
3. What are the reasons due to which the name "Muhammad" is the most popular in Pakistan?

### Implications of Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of planned behavior is extension of theory of reasoned actions which includes measures of control beliefs and behavioral control. Behavior of individuals is determined by intension of engaging in some behavior. In recent researches in the area of integrated models of behavior, researches show that there are additional determinants of behaviors such as social norms and culture (Armitage, 2001).

Determinants of behaviors are behavioral intentions, which are influenced by person's attitude towards a specific behavior and attitude of an individual is not predictor of his behavior, there are some additional factors like social norms and intentions to predict behavior( Cameron, 2012).Accuracy in performing different kinds of behaviors can be predicted from the attitudes towards specific behavior, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms which are account for difference in actual behavior(Ajzen, 1991).

According to the view about self-identities, personal naming are cognitive structures with important functional consequences. Names of individuals are something more than just a list of beliefs about a person. Self-identities are encoding information regarding general behavioral choices of a person in his or her interactions (Banaji, 1991). Proposed extended and modified model in cultural context of China proved valid in predicting hygienic food handling intention based on data collected from 901 questionnaires using eight variables including attitude, past behavior, habit etc. (Bai, Tang, Yang, & Gong, 2014).

A study conducted in Arkansas containing a sample of 400 African and American cocaine users which were not in treatment, Theory of planned behavior has provided insight into perceived need for cocaine treatment in African and American cocaine users (Booth, Stewart, Curran, Cheny, & Broders, 2014).

Modified version of theory of planned behavior was used to establish the conceptual model of purchase intention of microcredit of war-affected youth in Sri Lanka, in which 1603 responses from war-affected areas in Sri Lanka were, included (Jebarajakirthy & Lobo, 2014). Research conducted in Taiwan included 559 respondents, to examine the validity of extended model of theory of planned behavior for the purpose to predict the intentions of the consumers to visit green hotels and concluded that theory of planned behavior has a great explanatory power (Chen & Tung, 2014).

Theory of planned behavior was used in determining the continued intention of teenagers to engage in virtual world using the data of 923 users of Habbo Hotel (Mantymaki, Merikivi, Verhagen, Feldberg, & Rajala, 2014).

A study to examine the soundness of theory of planned behavior as a model of cyber-loafing in which two studies conducted in which the main model of theory of planned behavior was supported (Askew, Buckner, Taing, Ilie, Bauer, & Coovert, 2014).

Research conducted in city Qazvin, Iran including 1782 participants examined the factors associated with household waste behavior of Iranian community in the context of extended theory of perceived behavior (Pakpour, Zeidi, Emamjomeh, Asefzadeh, & Pearson, 2014). Work was done to predict the utilization behavior of internet among 214 undergraduate agricultural students by conducting a survey to apply the theory of planned behavior and concluded that theory of planned behavior is an excellent model in this regard (Miandashti, Memarbashi, & Khalighzadeh, 2013).

A study included 376 Japanese respondents to identify the issue of exceeding the speed limit of 30 km/h in urban resident areas by employing the theory of planned behavior (Dinh & Kubota, 2013). To investigate the intention of antecedents to take part in online buying and the relation between intention and behavior on the basis of theory of planned behavior, for this purpose an online survey was conducted including 373 registered members of ihergo website. (Cheng & Huang, 2013).

A study developed on adapted scale on the basis of theory of planned behavior and a questionnaire was filled by 449 participants to investigate the environmental behavioral intentions of employees at work place (Stride, Zibarras, & Greaves, 2013). A research tested the extended model of theory of planned behavior in the situation of continuance of participation and behavior on Facebook, in which data collected using surveys of 403 students of undergraduate and postgraduate at Jordan and proved this extension in theory is fruitful (Debei, Al-Lozi, & Papazafeiropoulou, 2013).

Research based on the main model of theory of planned behavior to see the motorcyclist's intention to ride beyond the speed limit and at in optimal speed and concluded as a good predictor of behavioral intentions to employ in different riding behaviors (Choriton, Conner, & Jamson, 2012). A study conducted to investigate the breakfast consumption in adolescent with a sample size of total 613 secondary school participants of UK and Australia, in which the extension in the theory of planned behavior has proved a significant contributor to results (Mullan, Wong, & Emily, 2013).

<b>Comments About Prophet "Muhammad" (Peace Be Upon Him).</b>			
<b>Sr. /</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>References</b>
1	<b>J.H. Denison</b>	"In the fifth and sixth centuries, the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible, since they had given to man a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers, had broken down and nothing had been found adequate to take their place. .... It seemed then that the great civilization which had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order were unknown..... The new sanctions created by Christianity were creating divisions and destruction instead of unity and order.... Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had over reached the world....Stood tottering....Rotted to the core.... Was there any emotional culture that could be brought in to gather mankind once more to unity and to save civilization? ... It was among the Arabs that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the east and south".	(Denison, 1928)
2	<b>S.P. Scott</b>	"If the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good works will avail in the great day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit that Muhammad was indeed an Apostle of God"	(Scott, 1904)
3	<b>Sir William M</b>	"It is strongly corroborative of Muhammad's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were not only of upright character, but his own bosom friends and people of his own household who, intimately acquainted with his private life could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which even more or less exist between the profession of the hypocritical deceiver abroad and his actions at home".	(Muir, 1912)
4	<b>Major A. Lec</b>	"If ever any man on this earth has found God; if ever any man has devoted his life for the sake of God with a pure and holy zeal then, without doubt, and most certainly that man was the Holy Prophet of Arabia".	(Leonard, 1909)
5	<b>Michael H. H</b>	"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in the history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels"	(Hart, 1989)

To examine gender differences of vegetable and fruit intake by collecting data from national cancer institute on the basis of the theory of planned behavior, Food Attitudes and Behavior Surveys and concluded that the constructs of theory of planned behavior have appreciably elucidated the gender differences (Emanuel, McCully, Gallagher, & Updegraff, 2012). To predict the extent of application of extended theory of the planned behavior to predict the behavioral intention not to 'drink and drive' among 1025 young drivers versus drivers aged above 35 and women versus men drivers in Norway, research was conducted. It concluded that model of extended theory of planned behavior works best for young drivers in comparison to others in the study (Moan & Rise, 2011).

A study included 130 employed motorbike riders in Yazd, a central city of Iran via clustered sampling to investigate influential determinants of helmet use behavior. The finding of this study provided groundwork for the effective applicability of extended theory of planned behavior in the context of intention of helmet use in employed motorcycle riders (Ali, Saeed, Ali, & Hiadar, 2011). In Chinese context research was employed with the support of theory of planned behavior with sample size of 211 members to investigate the factors coupled intention to take part in environmental activities (Park & Yang, 2012).

Research conducted to investigate the complementary feeding intention and behavior of mothers to their infants at the age of 6 months using the extended form of the model of theory of planned behavior, for which a sample of 375 mother's participated in the study (Walsh, Murray, White, Daniels, & Hamilton, 2011). A study included a sample of 404 Australians to examine the influential constructs in fast food consumption, for which the 'extended' model of planned behavior theory provided a better source of information about the nature of persuading factors in fast food consumption (Dunn, Mohr, Wilson, & Wittert, 2011).

### **Origin of the Name "Muhammad"**

The name "Muhammad" is derived from the Arabic word **حمد** (Hammd) meaning "To Praise". The meaning of the name "Muhammad" is "Praiseworthy". It is a very popular name in the Muslim world.

## **Blessings of the Name “Muhammad”**

The name “Muhammad” has many blessings; Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) said: “Whoever is named after my name with the hope of being blessed, he will be blessed and will be in peace till the day of The Day of Judgment.” He also said: “ who is blessed with a baby boy and he / she gave him the name Muhammad solely for the love for me as well as for the blessings of my name, then both, he / she and the son will enter Heaven” ( Usmani). If there is a person with the name Muhammad or Ahmed on dinning place, there will be blessing of Allah (God) on that place twice a day (Al- Madina Tul ilmiah (a), 2013).

The meaning of the name “Muhammad” is so beautiful (Praise Worthy), how someone can be abused having the name with such a meaning. In a house where a person with the name “Muhammad” is living is more blessed than the others (Qadri, 2012). Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” said “Prescribe those names which are like those of prophets” (Seyal, 2012). Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” said whenever you gave the name “Muhammad” to a child, then respect him, give him place in the gatherings and never say bad words to him (Qadri, 2012).

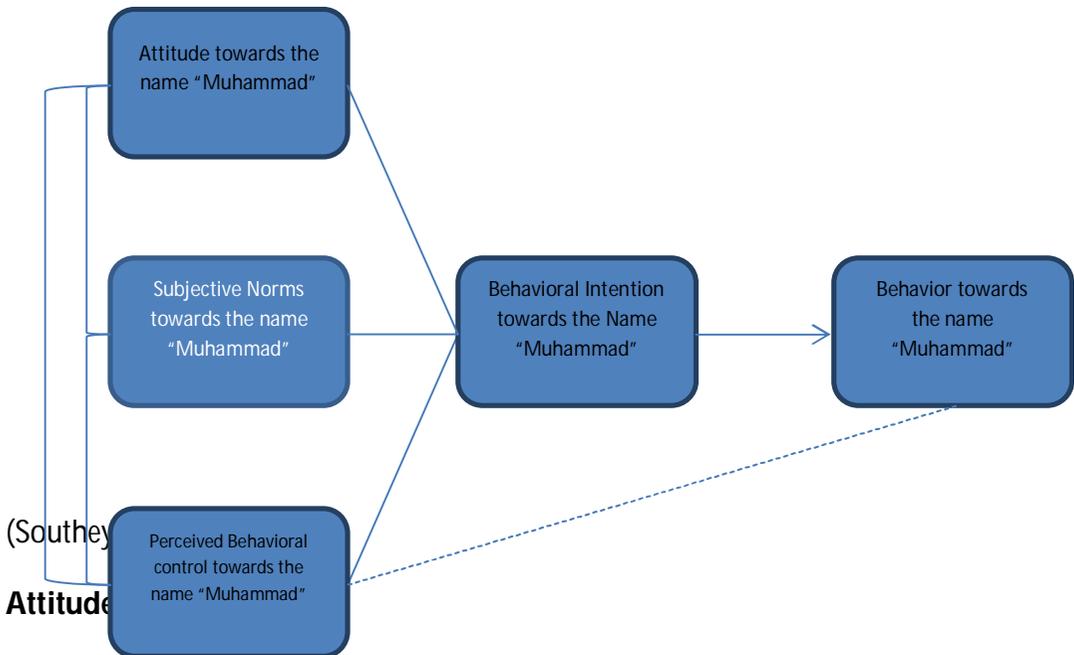
Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” said: call your brothers with nice names, not with the bad ones. [Hadith (saying of the prophet “Muhammad Peace be Upon Him”) No, 45211). Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)” said: it is the first duty of father to give his child a nice name (after the birth of child) (Hadith No, 45228). When you gave the name “Muhammad” to someone, don’t abuse him, there is blessing in the name “Muhammad”, in the house where a person named “Muhammad” is, as well as in the gathering where a person named “Muhammad” is present (Hadith No, 45212).The person who named “Muhammad” just for the sake of blessings, he will be blessed in the morning and evening, till the Day of Judgment (Hadith No 45213).

The person who is blessed with a son and he named him “Muhammad” just for the sake of blessings and love for me (Prophet “Muhammad peace be upon him”) the father and the son will enter into the heaven (Hadith No, 45215) (Al mutaki, 2009).

**Popular Personalities with the Name “Muhammad”**

Sr. No	Name	Hall of Fame	Country	Reference
1	Imam Muhammad Ahmad Raza Khan	Religious and scientific scholar/researcher	India	(Attar, 2014)
2	Muhammad Abdullah Baba Bulhay Shah	Religious scholar, Islamic preacher	Pakistan	(Al Madina Tul Ilmi
3	Muhammad Ali Jinnah	Founder of Pakistan, leader of Indian Muslims	Pakistan	(Hayat, 2008)
4	Allama Muhammad Iqbal	Muslim philosopher, poet	Pakistan	(Majeed, 2008)
5	Muhammad Bin Qasim	Muslim commander, general	Pakistan	( Wynbrandt, 2009)
6	Muhammad Yusuf	Cricketer	Pakistan	( Ekbal, 2009)
7	Abu Hamid Muhammad -Ibn-Muhammad Al-Ghazali	Islamic jurist, theologian and mystical thinker	Baghdad	(Ormsby, 2012)
8	Muhammad Bin Ismail Al Bukhari	Islamic scholar	Uzbekistan	(Khan, 2009)
9	Muhammad Ali	Sports man	America	(Hauser , 1992)
10	<u>Mahathir Muhammad</u>	Economist, politician	Malaysia	(Wain , 2012)
11	Muhammad-Ibn-Musa – Al-Khwarizmi	Mathematician	Baghdad	(Aves & Magill, 199

**Theoretical Framework**



“A disposition is to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects” (Garrett, 2010). Muslims have great love and respect for Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) that’s why they try to follow the path and behavior of Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)”. In this regard the behavior of Muslims is greatly affected by the sayings and doings of Prophet “Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)”. (Mead, 2008).

### **Subjective Norms**

“An individual’s perception of whether or not most people who are important to him or her thinks he or she should perform the behavior” (Griffeth & Hom, 2004). Muslims are in majority in Pakistan (Karim , 2005) and Family structure is very strong in Pakistan which has impact on most of the decisions to be made (Itrat, Taqui, & Qazi, 2008).

### **Perceived Behavioral Control**

“A person’s belief as to how easy and difficult performance of a behavior is likely to be” (Gochman, 1997). In Pakistan usually the responsibility of giving name to a new born baby is being given to the uncle, aunt, any other relative or decided by the mutual consent of all. Mostly people try to give the name to their baby with respect to the names of religious personalities like companions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) to have a spiritual connections to wards them (Al- Madina Tul ilmiah (a), 2013).

It is the responsibility of father to give his child a good name a good name is a first gift to a child so that’s why it must be nice and beautiful, a good name has a good and a bad name has a bad effect on the personality of a child, good name is the one which is having a good meaning and name is bad which is having a bad meaning. (Al-Madina Tul Ilmiah (b), 2013)

### **Personality**

There is no single complete definition of personality many writers have tried to define the concept of personality for example “The dynamic organization with in the individual of those psycho physical system that determines his unique adjustments to his environment”(Eysenck, 1950).

"Personality is a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determine those commonalities and differences in the psychological behavior of people that have continuity in time and that may not be easily understood as the sole result of the social and biological pressures of the moment" (Nardi & Berens, 1999).

### **Behavioral Intentions**

Behavioral intention can be defined as "*the person's perceived likelihood of performing the behavior*". Theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior assumes that there is a relationship between the behavioral intentions and behavior of a person (Sasané, 2008). Muslims do always have the intentions to follow the deeds and sayings of the prophet "Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)".

### **Conclusion**

Names do have the impact on the behavior and personality of a person. Attitude, perceived behavior controls and subjective norms contributes a lot towards the naming of the child. "Muhammad" is the most popular name in Pakistan as well as in many other regions of the world, which makes it the most popular name of the world.

### **Future Research**

Future research is needed to be done to empirically analyze the impact of the name "Muhammad" on the personality as well as on the behavior of a person. Other reasons also needed to be researched which contributes towards the naming the child "Muhammad" other than the religious prospective. What are the factors which makes it the most popular name other than being the name of Prophet "Muhammad (Peace be upon Him)". Many other reasons can also be identified by gross cultural studies of different countries because every country has different culture and traditions to follow.

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