



## Pakistani Teachers' Perceptions of Moral Education through Teaching of Islamic Studies: A Qualitative Study

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**Abstract:** *This qualitative research explored the perspectives of Islamiyat (religious education) teachers regarding moral values, teaching practices, and the challenges faced in moral education in the three main Pakistani education sectors, namely Madaris (religious seminaries), Public and Private schools. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with six secondary-level Islamiyat teachers, two from each education sector. Findings revealed that all teachers believed Quran and Hadith to be the main sources of morality. They focused on imbibing moral development only through lectures, sparse questions-answer sessions, the narration of stories and examinations. Moreover, they did not advocate the Islamic virtues of peace, tolerance, and human rights. Also, they expressed negative views of other religions and Western social practices. Participants considered an unsupportive social environment and unsupervised internet access as challenges to moral development. Hence, the study recommends that Islamiyat teachers should broaden their perspectives and use interactive and cooperative teaching strategies. Moreover, teachers should be provided professional training for the effective moral development of students through Islamic studies..*

**Key Words:** Islamiyat Teachers, Islamic Studies, Madrasa, Moral Education, Moral Values, Public and Private Sector Schools

### Introduction

Education is one of the foremost tools for stimulating all abilities of children to develop them into good human beings (Ali et al., 2022). In fact, education is not only meant to enhance knowledge, but its ultimate goal is to develop balanced individuals capable of autonomously pursuing personal-growth, independent critical-thinking and self-reflection (Ste'ç & Kulik, 2021; Asif et al., 2020). Unfortunately, less attention has been given to the latter due to prime focus on developing intellectually competent youth (Chowdhury, 2016; Rissanen et al., 2018). Education must aim to nurture the entire abilities of young children including their core ethics and moral values that are

widely accepted in the world (Segev, 2017). Schools can help eradicate the present vices in the students through focused attention on moral education through curriculum and teaching pedagogies (Siddiqui & Habib, 2021). However, schools are mainly focusing on intellectual development of students while neglecting their affective domains including their emotional, social and moral development (Rafikov et al., 2021).

Moral education is considered as a major part of students' holistic development; as such, religious education can be an important aspect in instilling moral values (Hasanah et al., 2022; Muhammed-Lawal & Hussien, 2018). There is a close relation between religion and morality

and different nations follow their distinct code of conduct based on their religious and cultural values (Naz & Kashif, [2020](#); Shah et al., [2021](#)). Teachings of all religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism (Ste'ç & Kulik, [2021](#)) and Islam (Khan et al., [2021](#)) promote values and good living standards (Iwuagwu, 2018). In Muslim countries, the Islamic ideology of the nation is supported by the education systems by teachings of Islam, which become the basis for individuals to distinguish between right and wrong and develop moral values (Niwaz, & Ishfaq [2018](#)).

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) states that Islamic Ideology is the basis for the creation of Pakistan which must be preserved (Article 41) and the State shall endeavor to make the teaching of the Holy Quran and Islamiat compulsory (Article 31). Moral education in Pakistan is mainly associated to Islamic studies (Niwaz, & Ishfaq [2018](#); Abro, et al. [2021](#); Shah et al., [2021](#)). Consistent with the country's religious ideology and philosophy of life, the National Education Policy (2017) Article 3.7.1 provides a framework for the next generation by introducing Islamiat as a compulsory subject from class III to Intermediate classes extending up to graduation in all general and professional institutions.

According to National Education Policy (NEP, [2017](#)), Pakistan's education system consists of two distinct streams i.e. formal education and Madrasa. The formal education system represented by Public and Private schools is the primary system for training of next generation while steps are being taken to integrate religious education with formal education system in selected Madaris (NEP, [2017](#)). The curriculum of Public and most Private schools as well selected affiliated Madaris is overseen by National Educational Boards with additional emphasis on Islamic teachings in the Madaris. However, the national policy provisions as well as the three education sectors have largely failed to achieve their core objectives of transforming the youth in becoming true practicing Muslims, capable of confidently facing the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup>

century (NEP, [2017](#); Siddiqui & Habib, [2021](#)). Our youth cannot comprehend the relation between their real life problems and teachings of Islamiat, which contributes towards failure to achieve an envisioned tolerant and peace loving society (Khan et al., [2021](#); Naz & Kashif, [2020](#)).

## Review of the Literature

### Morality and Moral Education

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Morality is defined as a set of rules, committed to the principles of right and wrong which are universally applicable and are judged by standards of human behavior (Sevim, [2021](#)). It comprises a set of common values that all sensible people use (Krzesni, [2015](#)). Accordingly, moral education is stimulation of the natural development of learners' moral judgment, which in turn, enables them to control their behavior (Narvaez, [2020](#)). Nurturing students as rational beings, capable of exercising their moral judgments, not just supports their conduct but is also beneficial for society (Nucci, [2016](#)). Hence, moral education aims to guide students in developing the right outlook toward life, improving their consciousness and laying a solid foundation for a promising next generation (Rosenberg, [2015](#)).

### Morality in Islam

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The moral attributes and values in Islam are derived from the holy book of Quran revealed on Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h as further demonstrated in his lifetime and recorded in the form Hadith (Mulyani, [2019](#); Shah et al., [2021](#)). In Islam, the notion of morality refers to the idea of justice, strong conduct, and the set of moral attributes and values defined in Islamic texts (Tahiri & Zubairi, [2017](#)). Both Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) constantly urge Muslims to be morally correct (Yaqin, [2019](#)). The most stressed moral values in the Qur'an are empathy towards others and also compassion towards the weak and needy. Helping those in need, forgiving people's mistakes, respecting the elderly, keeping promises, being compassionate to humans and

also animals, being courteous in distress, upholding justice, being trustworthy, and suppressing one's rage are all significant values in the Islamic philosophy of morality (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Islam defines a universal standard of living by which actions may be categorized as moral or immoral (Hassan & Rehema, 2021). According to Latif (2008) morality is the ultimate source for the strength of any nation, whereas immorality becomes the eventual cause of its decline. He further elaborates that Islam has provided a very effective moral system and morality is one of the cornerstones of Islam. Similarly, Halstead (2007) states that in Islam, religion and morality are two sides of a coin, as the moral behaviour is rooted in Islamic faith and faith is considered genuine only if it results in moral behaviour. True education in the Islamic perspective is the one which aims to transform 'heart' and 'soul' which changes the individual's nature to bring about absolute goodness irrespective of the society (Sukardi, 2016; Yuliasih et al., 2018). Therefore, moral education through Islamic lens is developed by stipulating child's physical, spiritual and psychological nature for initiating for good and right actions.

### **Islamic and Western Approaches to Morality**

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The main difference between Islamic and Western morality is that in Islam the moral values are derived directly from the Qur'an and the Hadith, whereas, Western morality is linked to family tradition, custom, society and the individual (Halstead, 2007; Haron et al., 2020). This idea emphasizes that morality is rooted deep in Islam and all actions are guided for the well-being of humanity. The source of moral values in western moral philosophy is generated through society and are considered to vary depending on circumstances whereas, according to Islam, source of true knowledge are revelations of Quran which sets the guideposts for all beings and which cannot be superseded by relative morality (Al-Aidros et al., 2013; Yuliasih et al., 2018). The goodness for a Muslim comes from within and the criteria

of right and wrong come from divine (Al-Aidros et al., 2013; Rofam, 2019). The Islamic standpoint emphasizes that morality of a person is derived by internal factor (soul) and not solely dependent on the environment with which he or she interacts including parents, schools or society at large (Saeed & Parveen, 2020).

### **Moral Education in Pakistan through Teaching of Islamiat**

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The traditional teaching methods being used for teaching of Islamiat include lecture method, question-answer, story-telling and discussion (Naz & Kashif, 2020). Instead, the constructive teaching pedagogies must be used for teaching Islamic studies that include guidance, counselling, role modelling and practicing opportunities (Aziz et al., 2016; Hassan & Rehema, 2021). In this regard, the subject-centered approach largely being used in Pakistan is not the best way of teaching religion at school. Ste'ç & Kulik (2021) explained that subject-centered approach serves to increase knowledge based on implementation of curriculum through the textbook and acquisition of knowledge is measured in terms of results. However, teaching religion or morality not only aims at transmission of knowledge but shapes the behaviours which are not measurable.

Ste'ç and Kulik (2021) proposed a person-centered approach, which is a psycho-didactic method, which is a blend of educational psychology and didactics of religious morality. The main aim of this approach is to synchronize the teaching and learning processes with educational environment such that it supports personal growth of each learner. It combines the cognitive factors of the educational process with affective aspects of teaching and learning focusing on mutually supportive and respectful professional relationship between teacher and student (Cerna, 2018; Boscaljon & Levinovitz, 2019). Such relationship fosters abilities and skills needed to acquire knowledge and deal with real-world challenges, participate in discussions on moral dilemmas and religious beliefs, understand each other's perspectives as

well as active participation in social interactions (Boscaljon & Levinovitz, [2019](#); Awan et al., [2021](#); Mulyani, [2019](#)). The criterion for evaluation is the change in a student's personality and cognitive skills which reflect on his or her development in terms of activity, productivity, self-reliance, and creativity (Cerna, [2018](#)).

### Statement of the Problem

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The addition of religious content in the curriculum and teaching of Islamic values in Pakistan has not achieved desired outcomes of producing good practicing Muslims (Khan et al., [2021](#); Khanam et al., [2020](#)). Despite being a compulsory subject in the National Education Policy for over three decades, there is an ambiguity surrounding pedagogical practices, goals and objectives of Islamiat (Ali et al., [2022](#)). The prime focus of the subject is to produce obedient Muslims but not necessarily responsible citizens capable of thinking critically and rationally. The current approach and pedagogical practices do not serve to promote inter-faith and cross-cultural harmony nor prepare students to face contemporary issues faced in a modern world (Khan et al., [2021](#)). In fact, the conservative approach of teaching morality through Islamiat does not augur well for religious pluralism, tolerance, peace and indiscrimination in society. In this context, Islamiat teachers have a significant role in the moral development of students by not only delivering moral content through Islamic teachings but also through effective teaching practices (Hasanah et al., [2022](#); Muhammed-Lawal & Hussien, [2018](#); Naz & Kashif, [2020](#)).

### Purpose and Research Questions

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Against the above backdrop, the current study aimed to explore Islamiat teachers' perceptions regarding moral values, their teaching practices and the challenges faced in moral development of secondary-level students from three education sectors of Pakistan. Aligned with the purpose, following research questions were developed for the current study;

- Q1. What are these secondary-level Islamiat teachers regarding moral values in the three sectors of education in Pakistan?
- Q2. What are the teaching practices of Islamiat teachers to develop moral values at secondary level in the three sectors of education in Pakistan?
- Q3. What are the challenges faced by Islamiat teachers in moral development of secondary students in the three education sectors of education in Pakistan?

### Methodology

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#### Research Design

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Qualitative method was best suited to answer the research questions of the current study, because this approach provided an in-depth analysis of the data received. Qualitative research method is an inductive approach to the inquiry, where the researcher generally explores the meanings and insights of a phenomenon in a specific context (Corbin & Strauss, [2008](#); Levitt et al., [2017](#)). Hence, this method allowed the researchers to explore Islamiat teachers' perspectives regarding moral values, their teaching practices and challenges in school setting.

#### Setting

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The research was conducted in six secondary schools located in Karachi, including two Public sector schools (boys and girls campus), two Private sector schools (boys and girls campus) and two Madaris (boys and girls campus). Public sector schools are funded and governed by state and private sector schools are owned independent of state. Whereas, Madaris are run by Ulema (religious scholars) and their primary focus is on religious education (Khanam et al., [2020](#); NEP, [2017](#)). For the purpose of this study, only those Private schools and Madaris were selected which were offering Matric education to keep selection at par with Public schools which follow only Matric education system. The Matric system provides education up to grade 10 and exams are conducted by the Board of Education, Karachi.

## Participants

Six Islamiat teachers of secondary level were selected through a purposive sampling technique. One teacher from each selected

school and Madrasa constituted the sample of the current research. Table 1 shows the detailed information of the research participants.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of the Participant Teachers

Teacher Code	Education Sector	Campus	Qualification	Years of Experience
PRB_TCH1	Private	Boys	MA Islamiat & Darse Nizami	11
PRG_TCH2	Private	Girls	MA Islamiat	14
PBG_TCH3	Public	Girls	MA Islamiat	13
PBB_TCH4	Public	Boys	M.Ed	25
MDB_TCH5	Madrasa	Boys	MPhil Arabic	18
MDG_TCH6	Madrasa	Girls	M.Com & Darse Nizami	21

## Tools

Semi-structured interviews with each key informant were conducted using a self-developed interview guide which was verified by experts. Each interview was held for about 50-60 minutes in the school premises with prior consent of the participant teacher. The detailed data collected through interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis.

## Findings

### Perception of Moral Values

Major themes that were developed from analysis of data from teachers' interviews pertaining to the first research question regarding Islamiat teachers' perceptions of moral values are discussed below:

### Islamic Virtues

All participant Islamiat teachers from Public and Private schools as well as Madrasas unanimously believed that moral values encompass the entire Islamic way of living. They did not distinguish between the moral values and Islamic values and believe that these two are inseparable. Their common sources of Islamic moral values are Quran and Hadith (sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h) as well as practices of other Holy Prophets and religious saints. PRB\_TCH1 with 19 years of teaching experience opined that "moral values are everything that Islam ordains us to do." Another Madrasa teacher MDG\_TCH5

shared similar views "*the entire Islamic religion is based on morality. Your all acts are based on moral values...We derive moral values from Quran, Hadith, character of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), life of religious saints.*"

Three teachers mentioned that they wish to pass the virtue of honesty to children while two teachers considered respect of elders very important. The teachers further considered moral values as their Islamic heritage. Three teachers PRB\_TCH1, PBB\_TCH4 and MDG\_TCH5 were of the view that few moral values are universal in nature but others differ according to societies. Islam and West have their own distinct interpretation of moral values based on their cultural differences and way of life. PRB\_TCH1 shared an example that "*freedom of women is common but its interpretation in Islam is that of veil, safety and security but in West it refers to boldness. Of course this is not universal. Few things like honesty are common but many things are not universal.*"

Two teachers PRG\_TCH2 and PBG\_TCH3 were of the view that non-Muslims in West have applied Islamic morals to prosper whereas Muslim countries are left behind due to various issues like poverty, lack of education etc. Following is an excerpt from interview of PRG\_TCH2:

*"Western world has high moral values. They are copying us and learning from us following law of Hazrat Usman (3<sup>rd</sup> Islamic caliph). We have forgotten the law despite being Muslims. Non-*

*Muslims have read our books, translated them and are following them. Countries like US and Japan have better moral values than Pakistan. Lack of moral values is due to poverty and price hike-so people don't have access to education and they are vulnerable to go astray."*

### Ethical Behaviour

Four participant Islamiat teachers understood moral values as ethical behavior. They viewed moral values in terms of social interactions, societal rituals and personal appearance. PBG\_TCH3 with more than 20 years of teaching experience elaborated behaviour as talking to elders and youngsters, walking when coming to school and behaving in different environment. Another veteran public school teacher PBB\_TCH4 expressed her views that *"it means that your attitude towards others should be good. Your speaking, movements, hands, eyes, tongue etc. all have a big role."*

Participant teachers shared that they particularly focus on the mannerism of students. PRG\_TCH2 with over 30 years of experience said that she keeps an eye on her girl students' movements but she receives complaints from parents when she points out etiquettes in students. She said that *"we keep an eye on their sitting / standing maneuvers... parents complain even if I tell children etiquettes to sit properly like girls not to sit with their legs spread or one leg over the other."*

Islamiat teachers discouraged western social practices and emphasized own distinct religious and societal rituals. While referring to Western practices, PRG\_TCH1 said that we are told to look into eyes when talking while our own values guide us to keep our gaze low while talking to elders as a sign of respect. Similarly, MDG\_TCH5 expressed his views that *"make the practice of saying 'salam' common. Because of distancing ourselves from religion, children use good morning, hi, bye. Next look at your dress. If your outside appearance is good, others will follow you."*

### Ineffectiveness of Direct Practice of Moral Education

Two public school teachers and a private school teacher pointed out ineffectiveness of direct moral education through Islamiat either because of inadequacies in curriculum or excessive workload amidst large number of students in class. A vignette from interview of PBB\_TCH4 underscores his standpoint:

*"There is no doubt that there are lot of deficiencies in the curriculum. First of all we choose those seven 'Ahadith' that bring realization in a person and a message. Secondly, those incidents are not included in Hadith through which we can do good upbringing. Incidents of prophets should be there like Ibrahim which have lessons for children and keep them interested."*

He further mentioned that an instructor from public school has excessive number of children in his class, ranging from 150 to 200. As such he could not give time to each child separately. PRB\_TCH1 shared similar viewpoint that *"they have less time as they are bound by matric board as well as other sports activities"*. All three participant teachers mentioned above believed that despite their efforts to impart moral values, they are unsure of implementation of moral lessons by children mainly because of unsupportive home and social environment. PRB\_TCH1 shared that *"learning objectives in curriculum are achieved but we cannot ascertain behavioral changes. Moral education is not a lesson to be memorized but implemented throughout life. We have games, social media, fashion and other distractions which deliberately push children towards evil."*

### Teaching Practices for Moral Development

Findings from interviews related to second research question regarding teaching practices of moral education are discussed below:

#### Lecture Based Moral Education

All participants primarily use the lecture method for teaching moral development to

students. They attempt to focus on moral values in their lectures through translation and explanation of Quranic verses and Hadith, citing examples from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) life as well as narrating prophetic incidents and stories. On the other hand, five teachers believed that interactive discourse and discussions in classroom on relevant societal issues with reference to Islamic teachings is the best strategy for teaching moral values. PRB\_TCH1 was of the view that Islamiyat subject is meant to relay divine message of religious obligations like mandatory acts in ablution. However, she realized that lecture method is not the most effective one. She said that *"when we lecture, we relay the message but children cannot remember all the points. But when a child asks question, it is very important as he never forgets it. So it is better to remain interactive."* Another teacher PRG\_TCH2 favoured teaching through sharing and display of information as she tells her students to *"note main points about any prophet or any good quote and paste it on your wall or the board. Let it be displayed for 2-3 days atleast so that children can have a glance at it and follow it."*

### Inconsistent Teaching of Moral Beliefs

While teachers believe that Quran and Hadith are the main sources of Islamic moral values, three teachers reflected inconsistency in moral beliefs in their approach during teaching. PRG\_TCH2 was reluctant to use online search engine over internet for relevant content as she feared it to be manipulated by non-Muslims. She said that *"I stopped using Google to search for teaching material since I came to know it belongs to Jews/ Israelis"*. She further told that she professes moral deeds because of fear of punishment from God. In her words: *"I teach children that if they take money of orphans, God will fill their bellies with fire. I tell them to imagine how painful this may be if you even put your finger on a burner"*. A madrasa teacher MDG\_TCH5 criticized Western countries and regarded them as enemies of Islam. He shared that *"in the past, our chemistry and biology scientists were experts of both religious and scientific subjects. They were taught religion and*

*science together. But Westerners and enemy of Islam have separated these."*

### Use of Intimidation to Maintain Classroom Discipline

All the participants shared the need of classroom discipline for appropriate moral learning environment. MDG\_TCH5 and PBG\_TCH3 mentioned discipline issues like fighting and competing for everything in class. PRB\_TCH1 said that he faces disciplinary issues from children of high-ranking officials especially when parents support them against teachers. In order to address discipline issues, PRG\_TCH2, PBB\_TCH4 and MDG\_TCH6 told that they tend to scold and scare children at times. In the words of PBB\_TCH4, *"once the class environment is disturbed, it is difficult to recreate it because they are 16 to 17 years old students. To control them, we have to scold them at times so that they keep quiet."* Similarly PRG\_TCH2 told that she demonstrates anger management in the class but also uses intimidation. She shared that *"when I feel angry in class, I quietly sit for 2 to 3 minutes, so that students realize that I am angry and they learn from it how to react. I have never hit children but scared them through staring."*

PRG\_TCH2 and PBG\_TCH3 maintained that they monitor students' behavior in classroom and point out mistakes to them. PRG\_TCH2 while explaining discipline mentioned practices like taking turns while responding to questions asked, saying of greetings and standing properly in her words:

*"I take care that they don't shout while replying... I ask them not to drink water with their mouth placed on bottle.... I say 'salaam' first and explain them that I will have more reward for this... When I stand, I keep my legs closed, I urge them to observe and follow me."*

### Demonstration of Moral Behaviour

All participant teachers recognized that they had a significant role in conveying moral values not only through teaching of curriculum content but more through demonstration of moral conduct and behavior. The moral traits they considered important to demonstrate in

classroom included honesty, humility, kindness, encouragement and respect. Two teachers PRB\_TCH1 and PBG\_TCH3 shared that failure to demonstrate appropriate behaviour may have negative impact on students' moral learning. PRB\_TCH1 opined that *“teacher’s role is much more than teaching of syllabus but if teacher is not honest than his lessons will merely be words disconnected from reality.”*

### Insufficient Focus on Moral Education

Three teachers PRG\_TCH2, PBG\_TCH3 and PBB\_TCH4 raised concern that time available in classroom for focusing on moral values is not sufficient as they must finish the lesson in allotted time. However, PRB\_TCH1 and PRG\_TCH2 shared that they sometimes set aside the lesson to address any moral concern in children. PRB\_TCH1 shared an incident that *“when I was teaching Quranic verse from Surah Ahzab in girls’ school, discussion arose about admissibility of music in Islam. A girl argued about it and we discussed it in the whole duration of the class.”*

All the teachers mentioned that they have lesson plans for teaching though not necessarily with stated learning objectives concerning moral development. PBG\_TCH3 shared that she explains the moral values in classroom without formally integrating them in lesson plan. She confessed that *“I don’t incorporate moral values in the lesson plan but I explain them. Because there is lot of written work, I cannot do planning of moral values but I should.”*

### Challenges in Moral Development

Findings of third research question from the interviews related to challenges faced by teachers in moral education are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs:

#### Unsupportive Home and Social Environment

All participants shared that unsupportive home and social environment are one of the biggest

hindrances in moral development of students. PRB\_TCH1, PBG\_TCH3 and MDB\_TCH6 emphasized that teachers, parents and society are the three sources of moral values which must be in harmony. In the words of PRB\_TCH1:

*“We get moral values from three sources: parents, teachers and society. All these three are connected to each other. If anyone fails to do its job, there will be issues in personalities....child in with us for 6 hours only and remaining 18 hours he is away with parents and society where he is not getting supporting environment for moral development”.*

MDG\_TCH5 was of the view that parents often fight among themselves and don't talk morally. PRG\_TCH2, MDG\_TCH5 and MDB\_TCH6 further highlighted the need for parents to be emotionally connected and involved with their children. PRG\_TCH2 however was of the opinion that parents should discourage their children to reason with elders. In her words:

*“Children question a lot in class like why it happens, how it happens, what if I do it like this... I realize that they may argue with their mothers the same way. Mothers should stop their children at the start and tell them that this is wrong and that they should not argue next time. Children would realize that their mothers didn’t like this. Problem is that children especially girls argue but boys usually keep silent if they are scolded”.*

Both private school teachers however complained that parents especially those who are high ranking officials do not support teachers in case of disciplinary issues of their children. PRG\_TCH2 said that *“parents pay high fees and therefore tend to be aggressive with teachers that they should not physically punish them or shout at them”*. On the other hand, both public school teachers pointed out serious moral issues in children mainly due to their poor socio-economic background. PBG\_TCH3 shared that:

*“Children come to government schools from families that we cannot even imagine. They don’t have any background. Most are children of housemaids, labourers, laundrymen, drivers who*



don't teach them anything at homes. It is so disappointing that they swear and call names here. We have to correct everything...They are habitual of cheating parents. This is their base. If you tell lie once, you don't hesitate any more to do wrong. They even do theft. They don't keep promises”.

Bad company and friends was another relevant issue raised by PRB\_TCH1, PRG\_TCH2 and MDG\_TCH5 which creates hindrances in moral development. PRG\_TCH2 emphasized that “one's choice of friends are reflection of his moral values” and that “parents should keep an eye especially on their sons' friends”.

### Unsupervised Internet Access

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Four participant teachers highlighted that proliferation of mobile phones and associated technology has afforded children easy access to internet without parental supervision. The problem compounded in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic as they were required to undertake online classes through internet. A public school teacher PBG\_TCH3 shared that “mobile phones have created lot of problems. We are not grooming them anymore but mobile phones do. Children from humble backgrounds have got mobile phone because of online classes during Covid-19 pandemic”.

In this context, PBB\_TCH4 told that children are more inclining towards immoral activities and urged that parents need to be careful while giving them mobile phones and monitor it. PRG\_TCH2 even disapproved providing mobile phones to girls due to its potentially unsupervised usage. She said that “there should be no mobile phones. They should be given a separate room at a particular age because use of mobile phones in their rooms is creating problem.”

PRB\_TCH1 and PBG\_TCH3 raised concern that unsupervised access to internet allows young boys and girls to socialize with anyone anywhere in the world which may have adverse consequences. It is thus promoting covert contacts between boys and girls which are not encouraged in conservative Pakistani society. They also make short videos using video hosting service like Tik Tok and share it freely

over internet. PBG\_TCH3 said that “in this age, girls and boys have affairs with each other. Environment is not good and we have to be very watchful.”

### Teachers' Personal Motivation and Attitude

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Three participant teachers underscored the importance of teachers' own attitude in moral development of students. PRB\_TCH1 pointed out that teaching being a low paid job is not among the sought after professions. Those who join the profession due to necessitation because of joblessness are mostly unmotivated. In her words, “teachers are not sincere to their profession. If teachers himself says that we could do something, we wouldn't have been teachers.”

Similarly MDG\_TCH5 highlighted that the teachers who only keep on criticizing children are not able to inspire them. He was of the view that high achievers in academics mostly do not join teaching profession. He observed that “those who secure A+, A1 grades go to upper level and don't do teaching. Those who are at lower level and secure B,C,D grades join teaching profession.”

### Discussion

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#### Distinct Islamic and Western Moral Guidance Leading to Moral Confusion

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Islamiat teachers' perceptions of morality were deeply entrenched in the timeless religious principles of Islam. Quran and Hadith being the prime source of moral values in Islam, there was consistency in their views as they conceived moral values in the context of manners/ behaviour, respect and character. Findings of the study conducted by Mulyani (2019) in Indonesia also highlighted that teachers of religion perceived Quran and Hadith as the foundation for character building in Islam and underscored religious beliefs for development of child's character. According to Halstead (2007) and Haron et al. (2020), the main difference between Islamic and Western morality is that the latter is linked to society and the individual and aims to provide framework for moral decision-making in terms

of right and wrong. On the other hand, Islamic approach to moral education seeks to disseminate knowledge and motivate people to act according to that knowledge based on the concept of reward and punishment in the life hereafter.

An interesting finding of the current study highlighted that Islamiat teachers do not speak well of Western philosophies and even label them as “enemies of Islam.” They discourage prevalent social practices adopted largely from Western world such as listening to music, freedom of women, greetings such as goodbye and good morning and many similar aspects Halstead (2007) underscores that children exposed to different kinds of moral guidance struggle to internalise a consistent framework of moral values of their own which may result in moral confusion and identity crisis.

### Subject-Centred Teaching Approach

Notwithstanding the consistency of perceptions regarding Islamic morality, participant teachers differed in their approaches and methods of teaching moral values. They mostly imparted knowledge of religious obligations and moral deeds through lectures, during which students were expected to take notes. They further believed that moral values thus imparted are reinforced through child’s interactions with teachers, parents and society. While teachers considered interactive approach to be more effective, they did not employ any cooperative learning strategy or active experimentation to answer questions of learners from their life experiences. Instead, they discouraged reasoning in determining moral values and even used punishment or intimidation to instil discipline. Mulyani (2019) in a study conducted in Indonesia highlighted similar teaching methods for character development including direct teaching through explanation, guidance, instructions, concept of rewards and punishment by parents and teachers. The current study indicated that Islamiat teachers do not attempt to build conducive environment in the class to relate religious knowledge with real-world challenges and encourage discussions on moral dilemmas faced by

students or conflicting religious beliefs as proposed through psycho-didactic approach by Ste’ç & Kulik (2021). As a result, teachers are unable to transpire students to think critically and rationally in real life situations in line with religious guidance.

### Influence of Students’ Family Background on Moral Development

Teachers in general and those from public sector schools in particular considered that poor economic conditions of parents due to poverty, unemployment and price hike adversely affect the moral development. Students in public schools mostly belong to a deprived community which struggle to make their living. These children are often unable to participate in collaborative social and leisure activities which negatively affect their self-esteem and cognitive development. On the other hand, private school teachers faced more discipline issues from children of influential parents. Moreover, teachers complained that they don’t get requisite support from such parents to maintain discipline. These findings of the current study underscore the influence of social environment on moral development and underline that morality is not solely dependent on the internal factor (soul).

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Pakistan was envisioned as an Islamic state in which the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam shall be fully observed. However, despite inclusion of Islamiat as a compulsory subject to instill these virtues, the educational process has not been able to successfully meet these objectives. Keeping the current situation in view, this study aimed to explore Islamiat teachers’ perceptions, practices and challenges in moral development at secondary level in Public and Private schools and Madaris. The findings highlighted that Quran and Hadith being a common source of moral values, there was a notable consistency in the perceptions of Islamiat teachers regarding morality; however, they differed in their teaching approaches and methods. They

mostly used subject-centered traditional teaching methods which only helped in transmission of knowledge without due focus on shaping students' attitudes. Therefore, constructive teaching pedagogies must be used to teach Islamiat, duly focusing of practical aspects of Islamic teachings along with the theoretical knowledge to ensure holistic development on Islamic lines.

Findings further highlighted that teachers expressed negative views about other religions and Western social practices. However, the societal practices as well as the formal education systems are largely based on Western

model. To further compound the issue, the traditional Islamiat teaching practices do not encourage discussions on moral dilemmas and diverse religious beliefs which results in moral confusion of students. It is therefore recommended that the Islamic principles of peace, tolerance, human rights and other universally accepted moral principles should be underscored in the curriculum and teaching practices. Moreover, pre-service and in-serving training of teachers in general and Islamiat teachers in particular should be facilitated to enhance their knowledge and teaching skills for moral development of students.

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