Ethical Dilemmas: A Perspective from Pakistani Higher Education Institutions

Shandana Shoaib
Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar

Muhammad Siddique
Liverpool Hope University, UK

Sohail Younis
Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar

Employees' deviant behavior has become a serious concern for employers as it puts organizational productivity at stake. The current study examined the existing unethical and immoral practices in the higher education faculty from the perspective of management. In order to achieve this goal, the study determined how faculty members' attitudes and perceptions towards moral standards and codes of conduct in Pakistan's higher education institutions manifest themselves in their actions while at work. Purposive sampling was used in combination with participant observation to conduct 19 interviews with the management of Pakistan's top universities, adhering to the qualitative tradition. As analytical techniques, pattern matching and cross-case analysis were applied. The findings revealed several intentional deviant behaviors that harm the work quality of academics. It is therefore important to address all such issues to preserve the quality of higher education.

Keywords: ethical, deviant behavior, higher education, faculty, professional employees, Pakistan

Organizational success depends upon the righteous conduct of its employees; however, not all employees embrace good behavior, either intentionally or inadvertently. As a result, some engage in deviant behavior—another word for unethical behavior—at work (Black et al., 2022). Workplace deviant behavior is gaining increased attention among scholars and practitioners (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019). Several organizations are faced with the problem of a steady increase in deviant behaviors among employees, thus posing a challenge for management. Therefore, scholars are busy trying to identify the causes of deviant behaviors in different work settings (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019). Behavioral issues arise due to employees' non-compliance with the organizational code of ethics, core values, culture, etc., hence affecting the achievement of the ultimate purpose of the organization, its goals, objectives, and organizational standards (Hussein et al., 2023). Counterproductive behavior, whether observable or not, is detrimental to organizational productivity (Black et al., 2022). A range of unethical or deviant behaviors have been identified, which include, but cannot be limited to, habitual absenteeism, unpunctual damage to organizational property, stealing and misuse of resources, malingering, sabotage, intentionally slowing down the work pace, taking unauthorized or prolonged breaks, nepotism, favoritism, etc. (Jawad et al., 2013).

Although people strive to do the right things, they at times cannot control their desires to steal, lie, cheat, and steal for personal gain (Shoaib et al., 2022; Jancsics et al., 2023). People's engagement in unethical behavior is influenced by their tendency for moral disengagement (Yunis et al., 2018). Particularly for activities that call for the use of self-control abilities (Gino et al., 2011), which could weaken their capacity for self-control and lead to unethical behaviors (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019; Jancsics et al., 2023). According to the authors, employees who have a higher propensity to morally disengage from their work are more likely to act unethically there. Various authors

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correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Muhammad Siddique, Lecturer, Business School, Liverpool Hope University, UK, Email: Email:siddiqm2@hope.ac.uk

have referred to moral issues as unethical behaviors (e.g., Bandura, 2002; Jancsics et al., 2023). In other words, employees view unethical or counter-workplace behavior as immoral (Tariq et al., 2022).

Deviant behavior is a key problem in higher education faculty (Moriña et al., 2020), mostly attributed to information asymmetry (Dalton et al., 2007) that is by default present in the job of these professionals. Information asymmetry makes it difficult for the principal to monitor (Muslim & Setiawan, 2021), which are prone to exploitation (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019). The literature has suggested two ways to curb this problem: direct monitoring and the provision of incentives. However, both have their limitations, i.e., direct monitoring may not always be the preferable mode of surveillance, and incentive provision has resulted in an inflated publication count that has taken a toll on quality. According to Shoaib and Mujtaba (2018), employees may neglect their duties or act selfishly in order to benefit themselves. In light of the given situation, this study examines behavioral problems in the higher education faculty in public sector universities in Pakistan to seek answers to research questions about what ethical and moral issues are present in the faculty and how these are manifested. This investigation covers a substantial gap in the literature by highlighting specific ethical and behavioral difficulties that are prevalent among academics in Pakistan's higher education institutions that are adversely affecting the quality of education.

Literature Review
Behavioral issues

Employees must accept the culture and values of their workplace (Dyer, 2023). However, not all employees strictly adhere to workplace ethics and instead disregard the organizational culture and its practices, creating a challenge for the management (Jha & Singh, 2023). Unethical behavior and deviant behavior have been used interchangeably, and this includes a variety of actions, including stealing and dishonesty (Chen et al., 2014), detrimental behavior (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), employees' misbehavior (Jha & Singh, 2023), and dysfunctional behavior in the workplace, which has the potential to harm organizational productivity, well-being, and organizational interests (Jancsics et al., 2023). Workplace deviant behavior is understood as any deliberate or controlled behavior exhibited by individuals in an organization contrary to organizational policies and codes of ethics (Othman et al., 2022). The author claims that these counterproductive work practices or employee actions go against the organization's true interests. The concept has been defined by Kotowitz (1987) as "actions of economic agents in maximizing their utility to the detriment of others, in situations where they do not bear the full consequences (p. 549)". Workplace deviant behavior is a form of negative reciprocity by the employees for any ill-treatment that they may have received from their organization (Khattak & Abukhait, 2024).

Contemporary research has focused on the positive outcomes of employees' behavior rather than looking at the other aspect, which is a deviation in behavior (Khattak & Abukhait, 2024). Higher education faculty members are usually provided incentives for increasing their output in the areas of research and teaching because the literature suggests that individuals can be motivated to raise their level of effort and, consequently, output, using some sort of payment that is linked to the work output (Olaskoaga-Larrauri et al., 2023). However, there is no guarantee that increased performance will be the expected performance on the appropriate work, and in the appropriate way, it needs to be looked into. According to Kayyali (2023), higher education quality has historically been limited to measurable factors, occasionally neglecting more significant but less easily quantifiable elements of the curriculum.

It is a well-known fact that academics oversee and participate in their institution's management, research, and teaching activities. However, according to Kayyali (2023), in higher education, excellent research and teaching can occasionally be seen as sources of paradoxes. Therefore, these two areas are the primary sources of academic behavioral issues. Because it significantly affects the quality of education and, by extension, the larger society, deviant behavior in the field of education has been of great concern to scholars. For instance, massive losses result from pervasive dishonesty and unethical behavior in both the public and private sectors (Nakitende et al., 2024). Some common deviant behaviors in the faculty have been pointed out by Ryan and Weinstein (2009), which include cutting down the course contents and teaching to the test to gain students' favorable evaluations. Furthermore, Shoaib and Baruch (2019) state that misconduct-related research seems to be substantial in scope and growing quickly, particularly the issues of plagiarism and freeriding, which lends support to the slogan "publish or perish" (Elbanna & Child, 2023).

Increased performance on tasks that will yield immediate financial gains (such as fabricating publications or adding more credit hours at the expense of quality) will entice faculty members and divert their focus from all other projects that have no financial rewards associated with them (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019).

Employees will thus shirk a task unless it has some contribution to their economic well-being (Spencer, 2023). Practices of this sort will have the opposite impact on higher education's quality (Elbanna & Child, 2023).

Pakistani higher education context

Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, higher education in Pakistan has gone through various developmental phases. The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah upon the recommendations of different stakeholders. UGC was then the federal regulatory institution for universities. Later in the 1960s, the UGC wanted to strengthen higher education in the country and therefore granted the existing colleges a degree-awarding status and introduced the culture of research in universities. Furthermore, in 1971, a new education policy was introduced according to which, within two years, colleges were upgraded to universities under state-owned regulations, whereas all private universities were nationalized. This was a time when exponential growth was witnessed in the higher education sector of the country. As a result, the groundwork was done for two internationally recognized private universities, namely Aga Khan University (1983) and Lahore University of Management Sciences (1985). However, due to a lack of sustainable policy infrastructure, inadequate funding, and flaws in the National Education Policy and its implementation, ultimately resulted in the Higher Education Commission (HEC) being founded in 2002. by General Pervaiz Musharaf, the reigning President at the time, thus replacing the UGC by this new regulatory body. Since then, the HEC has been taking care of the higher education requirements of the country by diligently regulating and monitoring all facets of the quality and promotion of higher education. Currently, the HEC recognizes around 132 universities and higher educational institutions, of which 73 are in the public sector and 59 are in the private sector.

According to the current rankings of the Times Higher Education World University, only four Pakistani universities could make it to the top 1,000 (Baty, 2013). Despite an array of reforms introduced in the higher education sector, the country is still struggling to keep pace with international standards. This fact is evident in the United Nations Global Education Monitoring Report (2016). The report has pointed out that the education system in Pakistan is 50 years behind global standards, which is why only four universities have just made it to the top 1,000 in the global university ranking. In addition to social class disparity, gender disparity is also prevalent in this region. More than 50 percent of the population comprises females, yet as little as 30 percent of this population is educated. Higher education was already out of the reach of lower-class people and is now even slipping out of the hands of the middle class. Even those enrolled in higher education are facing serious issues, such as outdated pedagogy and curricula, non-participation of students in classroom activities, and a shortage of eminent academicians, which has led the country to lag in basic and practical research in Pakistani universities, thus slowing down the process of innovation in almost every field (Murtaza, 2021; Aslam et al., 2023).

The study on ethical problems in Pakistan's higher education institutions seeks to fill a sizable vacuum in the body of knowledge. There is a paucity of thorough knowledge regarding the unique behavioral issues that exist in the faculty in the Pakistani higher education context, despite the fact that ethical issues are known to occur in educational settings. By exploring the distinctive ethical and moral issues present in academics and students, as well as the contextual elements that led to the creation of these issues, this study aims to close this gap. The study seeks to shed light on these issues in order to give policymakers, educators, and researchers useful information for creating strategies and interventions that will encourage ethical decision-making and improve the ethical climate in Pakistan's higher education institutions.

Theoretical perspective

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have distinct features that may impact how workplace deviance presents itself. A unique work environment is produced by the tenure system, the academic freedom provided to faculty members, and the emphasis on both teaching and research. It is possible to better understand how and why faculty members might participate in unethical and immoral practices by applying some classical workplace deviance theories to this situation. A range of theories have been put forward to understand the dynamics of deviant (unethical and immoral) behaviors in organizations. Applying these theories to the HEIs, we can understand the phenomenon in detail. For instance, the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) could shed light on how perceptions of unfair treatment by university administration lead to deviant behaviors such as absenteeism or reduced effort. The relationship between owners and managers, or principals and agents, is the subject of agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The theory addresses conflicts of interest that arise when agents, entrusted to make choices for the principals., have incentives that may not align with the principals' best interests. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) can explain how new faculty members might adopt deviant behaviors by observing their tenured colleagues. General Strain Theory (Agnew, 1992) can highlight how the pressures of publishing and securing funding contribute to unethical research practices. The Corporate Ethical Virtues Model

(Solomon, 1992) can be helpful in understanding how organizational virtues such as clarity, congruency, and supportiveness influence ethical behavior. Promoting virtues like clarity in ethical guidelines, congruency between stated values and actions, and support for ethical behavior can reduce deviant actions among faculty. Ethical Climate Theory (Victor & Cullen, 1987) and Behavioral Ethics Theory (Messick & Tenbrunsel, 1996) examine why individuals engage in unethical behavior despite knowing it is wrong, focusing on the psychological and situational factors that lead to such actions. Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1998) emphasizes the role of unspoken, informal agreements between employees and employers that can identify issues in the informal agreements between the faculty members and the management. Moral Disengagement Theory (Bandura, 1999) posits that individuals rationalize unethical behavior by disconnecting from their moral standards, allowing faculty to justify actions such as manipulating research data or exploiting student labor as necessary for career advancement. Faculty expectations regarding fair treatment, career development opportunities, and institutional support influence their engagement and adherence to ethical standards, with violations of these psychological contracts potentially leading to retaliatory deviant behaviors. Moreover, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2003) asserts that behavior is learned through observing others and cognitive processes. Faculty may adopt deviant behaviors observed in their colleagues, particularly if those behaviors appear to be rewarded. Conversely, witnessing the negative consequences of deviance can act as a deterrent. Finally, organizational culture theory (Edgar, 2004) highlights the impact of an institution's prevailing values, beliefs, and norms on member behavior. A culture emphasizing transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct can mitigate deviant behaviors among faculty. Understanding these factors can help institutions develop better policies and training programs to prevent unethical practices. By applying these theories, institutions of higher education and learning can develop more effective strategies to promote ethical behavior and mitigate misconduct.

Method

Design of the study and data collection

Purposive sampling was used to carry out semi-structured interviews with the management and a few knowledgeable people in order to better align with the study's objectives and explore emerging themes and topics (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). The process of choosing participants was based on their roles and areas of expertise within higher education institutions. The participants included senior faculty members, department heads, and deans who oversee academic conduct and enforce ethical standards. Their observations are essential to comprehending how faculty behave and how well-functioning the moral frameworks are that are currently in place.

Based on the demographics of the target population in Pakistani higher education institutions, where male faculty members and administrators predominately hold positions of authority and oversight, the decision was made to only include male participants. The gender makeup of the leadership in these organizations is reflected in this demographic reality. We made sure that participants were well-represented in terms of age, academic standing, and institutional affiliation in an effort to lessen the likelihood of bias.

The reason for collecting data from these participants is because the scope of this study has been confined to the management view of how the faculty engages in deviant behaviors. Moreover, due to the sensitivity of the topic, it was not sensible to ask the faculty about their behavioral issues because that might amount to immoral or unethical acts. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) state that gathering data from informed informants with a comprehensive understanding of the focal phenomenon is a crucial component of employing interviews. Purposive sampling was used in an iterative manner to select interview subjects with in-depth knowledge in order to maximize the amount of rich and deep data that could be used to address the research question (Kuzel, 1999). 19 interviews with top managers of higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) were conducted over a period of four months from April to July in the year 2019.

Prior appointments were made with all the interviewees. The interviewee chose the time and date that worked best for them because these were mostly individuals holding top-level management and supervisory positions in academic institutions and usually have tight work schedules. Almost all of the interviews took place in the respondents' offices. Prior to embarking on the interviews, the interviewees permission was obtained for tape recording the interviews. The respondents were further informed that at any time, if they do not feel comfortable with the recording, it could be stopped. The interviewees were asked to answer questions at their own discretion, since the goal was to gather information in a friendly manner rather than to offend anyone. The interviewer also presented a consent form to the interviewee at the start of the interview, which was duly signed by them.

The interviewer diverted from the questions outlined in the interview protocol multiple times if something interesting and informative was sensed that the interviewee was ready to share. This required developing a rapport

with the interviewee and making him feel that he had not been dragged into some boring activity. The average duration of the interviews lasted for 50 minutes, which was sufficient time to gather important data. In addition to conducting position-based interviews, the researcher made an effort to get the insights of experts who might be a useful resource for the study.

Four of the study's interviewees were vice chancellors, three were deans, and six were directors of large disciplines. Six more interviews were conducted with chairmen of different departments and directors of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of the chosen universities and HEIs. The coding scheme of the interviewees has been provided in Table 1 in the appendix. In the given alpha numeric codes, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G represent the six different universities and HEIs that include the University of Peshawar, Agriculture University, Peshawar, University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar, Islamia College University Peshawar, Khyber Medical University, Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar, and the Higher Education Commission. The numeric codes represent the interviewees or respondents. However, due to the sensitivity of the phenomenon under investigation, it was not appropriate to disclose the labels assigned to different universities and educational institutions. The age range of the participants is 46–64, with a mean age of 55.7. Sixty-eight percent held a doctorate, while the remaining individuals held master's degrees. Since they were all men, they represented gender inequality in Pakistan.

To cover all facets of the phenomenon, a thoughtful and comprehensive list of guiding questions, interview guides, or protocols was created. The protocol or interview guide was made up of open-ended questions and was divided into three parts that included the introduction, background information, and behavioral problems. In the introduction part, the interviewee introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the interview, sought consent for recording the interview, and ensured confidentiality for the participant. In the second section, which focused on background data, participants were asked about their position, role, experience on the job, and time spent in the higher education sector. This was followed by the last part of the questions related to behavioral problems in the faculty. Before asking questions about the existence of ethical and moral problems in the faculty, the participants were briefed on the operational definition of "ethical dilemma" used in this study. The participants were then asked in detail about ethical and behavioral problems that are present in the faculty. Some sample questions include: "What ethical issues and dilemmas you are aware of in the higher education institutions?", " What are some common ethical/behavioral issues you have experienced or observed in the faculty working within the higher education institutions?", "Can you provide any examples of such ethical issues or behavioral problems in the faculty?", "Can you provide some examples of ethical issues that can be specifically related to the teaching component of the faculty?", 'Can you provide some examples of ethical issues that can be specifically related to the research component of the faculty?", "Can you provide some examples of ethical issues that can be related other areas/aspects of the faculty's job besides teaching and research?" "Are there any cultural or contextual factors specific to Pakistan that influence the ethical landscape in higher education?" "How do these factors shape the ethical decision-making of the faculty?".

Table 1
List of Interviews

No.	Case	Position	Interviewee Code	Interviewee Duration
1	A	Vice Chancellor	A1	50 min.
2	A	Chairman, Chemistry Department & Director, QEC	A2	1 hour & 10 min.
3	A	Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences	A3	57 min.
4	B	Vice Chancellor	B1	1 hour
5	B	Director, Advanced Studies and Research, Director ORIC	B2	47 min.
6	B	Director, Advanced Studies, and Director, QEC	B3	1 hour & 5 min.
7	C	Dean, Faculty of Crop Production Sciences & Genetics	B4	1 hour & 20 min.
8	C	Vice Chancellor	C1	1 hour
9	C	Dean, Faculty of Electrical Engineering	C2	1 hour & 15 min.
10	D	Vice Chancellor	D1	48 min.
11	D	Dean, Faculty of Physics & Numerical Sciences	D2	57 min.
12	D	Chairman, Statistics Department	D3	55 min

13	E	Vice Chancellor	E1	40 min.
14	E	Director, QEC	E2	30 min.
15	F	Director	F1	55 min.
16	F	Deputy Director	F2	40 min.
17	F	Coordinator, MSc Applied Sciences	F3	1 hour & 44 min.
18	F	Coordinator, BBA	F4	40 min.
19	G	Chairperson, Committee for Development of Social Sciences	G1	40 min.

Multiple measures were taken to comply with research ethical standards to ensure that the research is conducted with integrity to safeguard the participants' rights throughout the research process. Some of these actions include approval from the Internal Research Committee, informed consent of the participants, concealing their identities, safe storage of the data, honest reporting of the findings, etc. First, approval was sought from the Internal Review Committee (IRC) before starting the study. This committee comprises the most senior people in the organization. An affidavit was also signed by the principal researcher, which stated that the researchers would maintain the highest ethical standards and make sure that nobody was harmed in any way as a result of this study. Second, the study complied with research ethics by obtaining informed consent from the interviewees to share their views about the presence of ethical and moral issues in the faculty. The participants had complete discretion to skip any question that they didn't feel comfortable answering. Also, the audio or video recording was done after seeking their permission. The participants were further informed that they could withdraw at any time or ask to stop the recording due to the sensitivity of the topic. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the goal of the study, its advantages, and any potential risks were explained to the participants. Third, to minimize the risk for the participants, their privacy was safeguarded by assigning codes or pseudonyms instead of using their personal identity. Moreover, all the interview transcripts or any other data were stored securely, and only authorized researchers had access to the data to avoid any misuse of the information. Fourth, every effort was made by the researchers during the transcription and interpretation processes to report the findings as per the true intent of the interviewees and to refrain from data fabrication.

Methods of Analysis

Using NVivo 9, a thematic analysis of the word transcripts was completed, which is a computer program for qualitative data analysis (QDA). This software allows the researchers to easily manage, analyze, and visualize large sets of qualitative data. New themes stopped emerging after about 13 interviews, a phenomenon known as "data saturation". When new participants are added to a study until all the data have been collected, this is referred to as data saturation. "Saturation is reached when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns when nothing new is being added" (Bowen, 2008, p. 22). Therefore, data saturation and sample size adequacy are directly related (Marshall et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the term "data saturation" is relative (Morse, 1995). Typically, sample size is determined arbitrary by qualitative researchers based on theoretical and thematic saturation points (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). 19 interviews were conducted, including 6 more to confirm the information already in existence. New interviews, however, had no effect on the coding scheme.

Thematic analysis was chosen for several reasons; the most important ones are: 1) Thematic analysis allows for holistic understanding by capturing any hidden themes, patterns, and overarching concepts. This allows for understanding complex social realities with respect to human behavior and also for capturing multiple perspectives present in the data. 2) Thematic analysis provides a structured framework in which the data can be easily and meaningfully organized and categorized, thus making it easy for the reader to understand social phenomena. 3) Thematic analysis enables the researchers to understand the subjective experiences, perspectives, and beliefs of individuals and is therefore more interpretive in nature. It captures the depth of social phenomena. Stake (1995) asserts that a qualitative investigation's interpretation—rather than merely the variables' identification—is what makes it unique. The data collector documents events objectively while also analyzing their meaning and rerouting the observation to support or deepen those interpretations. Researchers are urged by Yin (1994) to make every effort to present an analysis of outstanding quality.

Rigor and trustworthiness

In qualitative research, it is important to establish rigor and trustworthiness to ensure that the findings are reliable and valid. Rigor in the research was ensured by adhering to ethical requirements and keeping the process transparent via proper documentation of facts. The research was carefully designed by selecting the

institutions that were rich in information and the participants who were most knowledgeable about the phenomenon under consideration. Additionally, there was transparency in the procedures used for data collection and analysis. The interview protocol was developed to maintain consistency in information collection, and all the cases were analyzed in a consistent manner. The interview protocol and case protocol ensured the reliability of the data generation and analysis. Every interview was taped, and the transcripts were written as soon as they could be so that no important information was lost. Field notes in the form of memos were also generated to elaborate on any factual findings rather than simply exaggerating. Once the interviews were transcribed, the written texts were shared with the interviewees to make sure that the information they had provided was documented correctly; hence, the focus was on minimizing bias and maximizing the reliability of the research outcomes.

Internal validity is the degree to which the research's conclusions are accurate (Zikmund et al., 2010). As there are other possible inferences besides the ones the researcher is claiming, claiming validity in case study research is not an easy task. Both internal and external validity are emphasized by LeCompte and Goetz (1982). When it comes to case studies that are causal and explanatory, internal validity is crucial (Yin, 2003). Pattern matching and explanation building, according to Yin, can be used to assess a case study's internal validity. According to Eisenhardt (1989), various data combinations can work in concert with one another. The internal validity of the study was established by combining data collected from two different sources, such as interviewees and participant observation. The data from the interviews was validated by the data from participant observation. This technique refers to triangulation. There are several instances of such validation; however, as one interviewee stated, "*When a spouse shares the same occupation, each partner will give the other a free ride. Knowing that it is immoral and unethical, even then we are indifferent toward them.*" This claim of the interviewee was confirmed by the participant's observation, and it was found that couples would support each other in the publication count by resorting to the act of freeriding. Usually the husband would accommodate his wife, when both were part of the faculty, by making her a co-author. This way, both would benefit from a single endeavor.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, participant observation techniques were used in the study to gather qualitative data. According to Yin (2003), participant observation, unstructured or semi-structured interviews, documents, archival records, and direct observations are the typical sources of qualitative data. A researcher took on the role of participant-observer. As a faculty member by occupation, she got to know the other professors and had a number of conversations, both unplanned and scheduled. In addition, participant observation "eliminates the possibility of being fooled by initial appearances by allowing the researcher to assess the consistency of people's statements, moods, and behavior at different times and in contrasting situations" (Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 162). The researcher had to remove her emotions from the whole situation in order to prevent being influenced by her own whims and to obtain an accurate and complete picture by viewing it from a distance. This prevented any potential tendency toward bias in data collection. Participant observation involves the researcher becoming actively involved in the context or setting being studied. This approach makes it possible to observe social interactions, behaviors, and experiences firsthand, producing rich and thorough data.

Field notes were taken during observations and even during interviews. These filed notes were stored in the form of memos. Memos were a reflection of the researcher's ideas and interpretations, along with objective observations of actions, interactions, and events. Taking notes of the surrounding environment, nonverbal cues, and any other pertinent contextual information also became part of the qualitative data. These notes were expanded as soon as possible to eliminate any chance of errors of any kind, including those involving sensitive personal information. As a result, the convergence of results from various methods validated the study's findings and expanded on them. Using multiple sources of data is known as triangulation. In this study, triangulation was used to address the shortcoming that arises from using data from a single source, therefore increasing the validity of the findings. Usually, the external validity is weak in qualitative studies, including case studies (Yin, 1994). Because small samples prevent researchers from drawing larger and more robust generalizations, a case study design cannot be generalized from the sample to the population. Keeping this limitation in mind, the researchers aim was not an absolute generalization of the results to the population or to claim something with absolute certainty, but to understand the phenomenon of behavioral issues among higher education professionals. Thus, the appropriate strategy is "analytic generalization" rather than "statistical generalization," as suggested by Yin (2003). Using a multiple-case study design and replication logic increased the robustness of the research outcomes. Saunders (2009) suggests the use of triangulation, particularly in a case study approach, to assure that the data is close to the researcher's interpretation of it.

According to Johansson (2003), triangulation is a crucial tool for guaranteeing the validity of case study research. Mearman (2006) states that triangulation confirms consistency, which in turn increases the research's

credibility. Triangulation is necessary because it is ethically required to confirm the accuracy of the processes, which can be done by using multiple data sources (Yin, 2009).

The analysis was organized by following a series of steps, which are discussed below: The process produced a comprehensive set of descriptive and inferential codes, which were then woven into the pattern code or the analysis's central theme. Pattern matching and cross-case analysis were two analytical techniques that were used to uncover a wide range of perceived moral and ethical hazards among the faculty. Researchers found recurring patterns by coding and categorizing the observed data; these patterns were further examined to produce insightful conclusions. Iterative data coding required careful consideration on the part of the researcher to ensure coherence. The thematic analysis was executed using the following steps: First, the data were sorted, which means that the audio-video interviews underwent meticulous transcription, resulting in insightful articles. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a write-up is an intelligent product that is simple to read, accurate editing, commenting, coding, and analysis using any analytical technique. The fragmentary statements of the interviewees were given flow by the researcher. This refers to instances during the interviews when the respondents were talking one-on-one and suddenly switched over to something else. All the transcriptions were stored in the form of write-ups and later transferred to the NVivo 9 data file for detailed analysis. In addition to these formal interviews, the data collected via participant observation in the form of field notes was also converted into memos and stored along with the interview write-ups. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a memo does more than just report data; it conceptually connects two pieces of information to form meaningful clusters. This step was followed by familiarization with the data by the researchers. The write-ups were carefully read repeatedly to get the meaning out of them.

The generation of codes at three different levels came next. After the data was transferred to NVivo 9, the coding process started. This is where the in-depth analysis of the data started. Data coding was an iterative process that demanded careful thought from the researchers. In order to conduct a more thorough analysis, the researcher in a qualitative analysis must organize the data into systematic categories, according to Guba (1978). Based on the methods proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Dey (1993), the coding technique used descriptive, interpretative, and pattern codes. Using the splitting technique, categories were divided into subcategories to enable more thorough analysis and the exploration of alternative meanings. According to Dey (1993), the "splitting" and "splicing" techniques made it easier to generate code at various levels. The author defines "splitting data" as breaking a category up into subcategories and then placing the individual data pieces under a particular subcategory. The "splicing" technique, which is the reverse of "splitting," is the second method employed by Dey (1993). By establishing links between the categories, splicing consolidates the data. Splicing is the process of bringing data together to create meaningful chunks and braiding them together for improved integration. In contrast, the splicing method involved combining data by linking related categories for better integration. NVivo's use made it easier to organize and manage codes during the laborious coding process. Initial coding was done manually, and subsequent coding was done using NVivo. The coding processes in the study cycle are referred to as filling, extending, bridging, and surfacing, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes are labels or tags that are applied to data chunks to give meaning to the case's descriptive or inferential information (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Table 2 shows the descriptive and inferential codes. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), descriptive codes involve minimal interpretation and assign a class of phenomena to a passage of text. One can approach the same passage of text in a more interpretive manner. The researchers developed interpretative codes by going over the transcriptions several times while keeping in mind the interview context.

Categories were thus created from descriptive codes that were later converted into pattern codes. Pattern codes made the categories sharper and clearly distinguishable, and their role became more defined in the analysis. In NVivo, a number of lower-level codes were stored under a higher-level code known as the parent code. By essentially moving the codes of the child nodes around in NVivo 9 to determine where they fit best, the analyst was able to change the location. The codes were later explained from both a technical and contextual angle after the preliminary coding was completed in NVivo. For example, as provided in Figure 2, teaching, research, and other tasks are parent codes representing behavioral problems in the faculty related to three different areas of their work. Under each parent code, there are a number of child codes. For example, under the parent code of teaching, there are a number of child codes that include punctuality, absenteeism, knowledge, course management, methodology, examination, and counseling. The parent codes represent the three main aspects of a faculty's work and make up the three categories: teaching, research, and other tasks. These categories are terminated into the main

theme, such as perceived behavioral problems in the faculty, as provided in Table 2. The entire coding process (Data→Codes→Categoreis→Theme) is summarized in Figure 1.
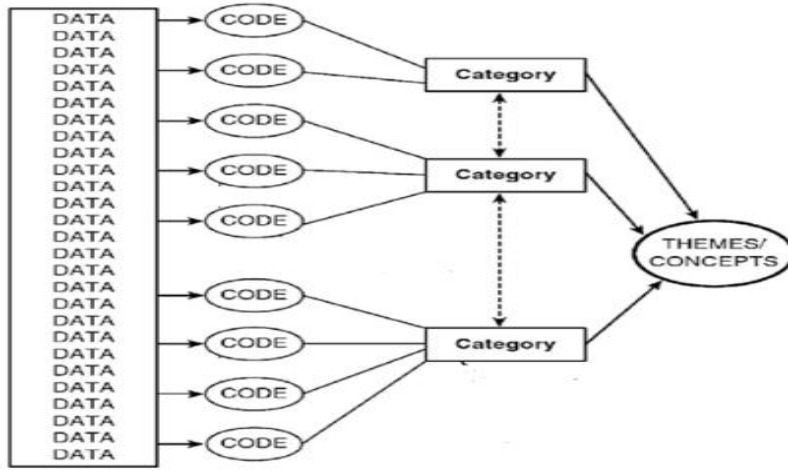

Figure 1: Three-Level Coding

Consequently, all of the primary categories or parent nodes were covered in brief first, followed by an explanation of each child node and its relationship to the parent node. The categories were gone over again and again to determine how they related to the study's goal and the literature review. Iterations arose throughout the entire process. Guba (1978) suggests that an evaluator must address the issue of "convergence" before concentrating on the analysis of qualitative data. Finding the patterns that fit together to classify the data is the problem of convergence. First, the analyst scans the data for "recurring regularities," or patterns that fit into distinct categories. According to the authors, these codes pull together a lot of material into meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis and are sort of a "meta-code." The arrangement of the codes at three different levels has been provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Three Level Coding

A short description of the code	Descriptive codes	Inferential codes/ categories	Pattern code/theme	Interview excerpts with the participant's code
Behavioral Problem	**BP**			
Lack of punctuality	**BP-Teah-** *Punc*	**BP-Teah** Behavioral problems related to teaching	Perceived ethical, moral, and behavioral issues in the faculty	*"The faculty members do not follow their class timings, which has become a university norm. The management is aware of the problem but could do less to address it. The students follow the footpaths of their instructors, who are their mentors and role models, and have adopted similar behaviors." (*E2)
				"I don't know what else we can do, to ensure the presence of the instructors in the scheduled classes, but I guess we are not alone in facing this dilemma." (B1)
				"The faculty's attendance and punctuality are twin problems that are difficult to control." (C1)
Outdated knowledge	**BP-Teah-** *Kwg*			*"....the faculty members do not want to trouble themselves and prefer to use notes and display slides that have been created ever since they started their teaching career."* (A1)
				Teaching at a higher level requires higher skills. Moreover, the course books that are followed by the educators are written by Western authors that reflect their local context. Many of the concepts that have been used in these books are totally unfamiliar to our culture and environment. When instructors follow these books from page to page, the students, instead of learning the concept and its application, are left to wonder." (B1)

			"In the undergraduate program, there has been a system for the last 50 years, and the same is being taught by the worst teachers. The course is outdated, and the faculty never bothers to provide updated knowledge to the students. Students are least interested in typical class lectures that are time-bound." (E1)
Inappropriate teaching methodology	**BP-Teah-** *TechMeth*		*"Non-interactive lectures bore the students, and they lose track of what the instructor is teaching in the class... When the instructors follow the books from page to page, the students, instead of learning concepts and their practical applications, are simply left to wonder."* (B1)
			"We have "book teachers, who even remember the page numbers because the same book is being taught over the years." (F2)
			"I know many teachers who do not want to be disturbed by the students during their lecture, and therefore discourage students from asking questions. Some faculty members mind it to the extent that if a student wants to engage in a discussion, the instructor will hush him/her by passing snide remarks, i.e., you think you are smarter than me." (D3)
Deception in course management	**BP-Teah-** *CourMgt*		*"Faculty members even fiddle with the course contents during class instruction. It is very difficult for the management to tell what a faculty member is teaching in the class when it comes to highly specialized modules."* (D3)
			"If a teacher misses out on a class due to any reason, the make-up classes are arranged just to cover up for the lost teaching hours and not necessarily for the purpose of student learning." (B3)
			The real problem is that it is very difficult to see what the teacher is teaching in the class and whether he or she is teaching the students what is supposed to be taught. Teachers take advantage of this situation, and they teach anything that is easy for them, which might or might not be the course requirement." (D3)
Indifference toward student counseling	**BP-Teah-** *StdCounl*		*"Students wait outside the offices of their teachers in hope of finding them, but are often disappointed. However, some lucky ones are able to catch them. We receive complaints from the students, but like them, we are also helpless in this regard."* (A3)
			"Personal ego-type things have corrupted the system." (B3)
			"Teachers have a bureaucratic approach towards the students, and many are indifferent towards the students' genuine problems." (E3)
Cheating the examination system	**BP-Teah-** *Exm*		*"Because their evaluation is based on the students' test results, faculty members often write simple papers in order to receive high marks. Creating simple papers will make it easier to mark transcripts and foster a fondness in students for future performance evaluations with higher scores.* (C1)
			"An incidence was reported by the students where the exam paper had two questions because the teacher taught only a couple of chapters in the entire semester. We trust the faculty, but many times it has let us down. Students come to us complaining about the teachers giving out questions in the exams about which they have no idea, as the teacher never taught these topics in the class." (C2)
Absenteeism	**BP-Teah-** *Abst*		*"Punctuality of the faculty is monitored, but regularity is not present due to the non-existence of a system that can ensure the presence of the faculty at the beginning and end of the class, such as there is no register where the faculty members can place their signatures to record their attendance. A faculty member may be absent from the scheduled classes for several days and can ensure that such acts go unnoticed."* (F2)
			One way to keep a check on the faculty is that the coordinators try

			to spread the workload in such a way that it stays on campus throughout working hours. In the absence of such an arrangement, faculty members might disappear after taking their classes in the morning.” (F4)
Lack of research initiative due to an inappropriate culture	**BP-***RshInti*	**BP-Rsrh** Behavioral Problems Related to Research	*“In a power-oriented culture, people love to be more controlling than productive. People want to extract more power from administrative activities without realizing that their potential can be spent more productively elsewhere. There is no harm in becoming more powerful, as long as it does not adversely affect a person’s sense of responsibility. Teachers are provided every opportunity for research, but they are less interested in capitalizing on those opportunities.”* (A1) *“Faculty members are reluctant to take up research projects as they require a lot of effort and hard work. That is why, despite having the capability, [the] faculty members have to be urged for research endeavors.”* (B2) *“We are pushing them [the faculty members] to write papers because this is in line with what the higher education commission is asking them for their career advancement, especially for the TTS faculty, whose research profile is carefully monitored.”* (C1)
Inflation of the publication count	**BP-Rsrh-** *Pub*		*I have seen publications of hardly a couple of pages that are of low quality, which found their way into the local journals using personal links. A complete research project is also broken into parts, and each part is published as a separate publication. Some people consider it ethically correct, while others label it a moral hazard.”* (B3) *“We need academia-industry linkages so that scholars can generate research findings that can be implemented in different sectors. I am afraid this much-needed link is still missing.”* (F2)
Freeriding among the faculty	**BP-Rsrh-** *FreRid*		*“You scratch my back, and I will scratch yours. I guess it says all.”* (D2) *“It’s an age-old practice and is very much alive to this day. Mostly, the senior faculty is involved in "freeriding." The juniors include the names of their seniors, simply to please them because the latter can extend favors to the former in different ways.”* (E3)
The problem of plagiarism	**BP-Rsrh-** *Plag*		*“What can be done if the defender of a system becomes the violator? Although the HEC has put in place the plagiarism software “Turnitin” in every university, the faculty and even the students know how to fiddle with this software. Plagiarism from the universities cannot be ruled out entirely, but it can be mitigated to a greater extent through proper grooming of the faculty.”* (A1) *“Some faculty members steal the work of their students and rearrange things to give it a different look. Students can never identify their work because the scholars are masters of this act. This should not be generalized to all the faculty.”* (D4)
Indifference Toward Students’ Research	**BP-Rsrh-** S*tdRsh*		*“In the recent past, problems with the students’ dissertation were pointed out by the Director, and the Research Coordinator was informed about the substandard quality of such reports; at the same time, teachers who were 160 Chapter 6 Depiction of the Problem of Moral Hazard in Educators supervising these students were issued a warning for faulty reports. Students’ dissertations, not all, but there are many that do not qualify the quality bar set by the Institute and the HEC.”* (F3)
Professional jealousy among the faculty	**BP-OtrTsk** *PrfJel*	**BP-OtrTsk** Behavioral Problems Related to Other Tasks	*“Professional jealousy is a cultural thing. Like other professions, it is quite common in academia."* (A1) *“The senior faculty exploits the junior faculty and will overburden them with a variety of tasks, leaving them with little time to focus on their teaching and research publications."* (A3)
Secondary employment by the faculty	**BP-OtrTsk** *SecEmp*		*“Some faculty members take dual jobs to earn more money, although dual employment is not allowed in universities."* (D2) *“There are faculty members who are running their private tuition centers. They are rarely seen on campus and are never available for their students… The problem of private tutoring seems to be the biggest challenge faced by the education sector.”* (D1)

| Reducing work pace (go-slow) | **BP-OtrTsk** *WrkPce* | *"The seniors are not allowing the juniors to exceed the work pace that has been set by them in the past."* |
| | | *"Yes, I've also noticed that. I believe there may be a number of causes for this behavior…Faculty members may be overworked and exhausted, which causes them to slow down in order to handle the workload."* (G1) |

Cross-case analysis is regarded by Yin (2003) as a traditional component of the multiple case study design. Data were gathered from various institutions for the current investigation. Every institution was examined individually at first, and then it was compared to other institutions to look for trends and a shared explanation of the phenomenon being examined. To improve the transparency and validity of the analysis, Yin (2003) methods of pattern matching and cross-case analysis were used. The cases were evaluated and contrasted with one another in light of the data that was available. The primary behavioral concerns related to efficient instruction that emerged from the data analysis were comparable to those found in the body of existing literature.

Results

RQ: What ethical and moral issues are present in the faculty, and how are these manifested?

Perceived moral and ethical issues in the faculty

The analysis shows that behavioral problems of all kinds are common among Pakistani HE faculty. The primary issues surrounding research, education, and other matters are listed below.

Behavioral issues related to teaching

Issues that surfaced concerning effective instruction are similar to those reported in the literature (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019; Ryan & Weinstein, 2009). Some similarities may be explained by the nature of teaching; these include things like not being on time, tardiness, liquid absenteeism, traditional methods, out-of-date material taught in class, poor course management, disregard for student counseling, and exam cheating.

Public HEIs appear to be tainted by the issue of academics' improper behavior. First, it seems that being absent from work frequently and being late are now accepted norms. The problem was stated by the director of QEC at one university in the following words:

"As is customary at universities, the faculty members adhere to the times assigned for their classes. Although they could do more to address the issue, the management is aware of it. As mentors and role models, the instructors set an example for the students, and they have adopted similar behaviors." (E2)

Despite being aware of the issue, the management does not appear to have made a sincere attempt to address it. The management's lack of ability to monitor academics' punctuality or its callous disregard for the issue could be the cause. Thus, HE institutions are not the only ones experiencing this issue. It is typical of the majority of professionals working in this field in Pakistan as well as all public sector establishments (Shahzad et al., 2011).

Second, Pakistani HEIs clearly practice passive classroom instruction. Academics continue to be mired in their dull lesson plans and ineffective teaching strategies. According to Zhu et al. (2013), there are irrational expectations that the current student body would gain from traditional methods of instruction. Students view these kinds of instructions as a waste of time, so they start using social media or their phones to browse the internet during class. As stated by a university's vice chancellor:

"Students become disinterested in non-interactive lectures and become disoriented from the instructor's lesson plan. Instead of teaching concepts and their real-world applications, teachers who blindly follow the books' pages leave their students to wonder." (B1)

Books by foreign authors, who are primarily from developed nations, are used for instructional purposes because there aren't enough books written by people in the area. Numerous ideas and frameworks found in foreign literature are strange and inappropriate in the local setting. Students have no choice but to memorize notes and textbooks in order to pass exams and get good grades because teachers fail to explain fundamental concepts to them. A higher education institution's deputy director expressed his concern in this way:

"Because they have been teaching the same book for years, our "book teachers even remember the page numbers." (F2)

Furthermore, students' future employability skills are given very little consideration in the current curricula, which are primarily focused on theoretical knowledge. In addition to being embarrassing for the graduates, this circumstance calls into question the caliber of HE. The interview excerpts make it clear that this is a "national problem" that affects the entire population of the country.

Third, course management is a topic that the interviewees highlighted as being important for effective teaching. The required course outlines are purposefully strayed from by the faculty. If the goal is to adjust the course material to the understanding level of the students, then some degree of content modification is acceptable. Course content modifications that are made maliciously or to the point where they alter a module's essence may be considered academic delinquency. This issue is known as information asymmetry in the literature. The following is how the chairman of a department at one university described the issue:

"During class instruction, faculty members even tamper with the course materials. When it comes to highly specialized modules, it is extremely difficult for management to know what a faculty member is teaching in the classroom." (D3)

The fourth challenge is exam cheating, which is one of the topics covered in academic dishonesty and incentives literature the most (Radda, 2009). "Teaching to the test" has been identified as the issue (Popham, 2001). The faculty occasionally inflates the test results of their students in various ways because it is a significant component of their performance evaluation and an observable metric (Ryan & Weinstein, 2009). Inflating test scores gives the management the false impression that the instructor has taught the course well and that the students have learned. Instructors do this for a variety of reasons, including making the students happy by giving them good grades, which will lead to higher evaluations from the students. Nevertheless, manipulating test results is merely pretentious and doesn't result in actual advancements in education. This is similar to putting a flamelight next to a thermometer in a frigid room; the thermometer reading rises but the room stays cold. Faculty members benefit from positive evaluations in terms of job security and promotions. For instance, a persistently low evaluation score of less than 60% may make it difficult for faculty members to be promoted to more senior roles, may even result in pay reductions until performance improves, and may even result in termination from their employment. According to a dean of the faculty at a university, academics also frequently make the personal mistake of being too lenient or strict, which causes the entire examination system to be abnormal.

"Because their evaluation is based on the students' test results, faculty members often write simple papers in order to receive high marks. Creating simple papers will make it easier to mark transcripts and foster a fondness in students for future performance evaluations with higher scores." (C1) .

Hoodbhoy (2003) laments the HE system, calling it a "lumpen graduate" factory that produces large numbers of students and viewing the exams as memory tests rather than learning experiences. Ignorant and uncaring, the students are incapable of constructing a coherent argument and have dreadful reading and writing abilities. These students don't often possess skills that are associated with higher education.

Moral and ethical issues related to research and publications

Academic research productivity has increased thanks to the HEC. HEIs are convinced to meet the goals of producing more publications and more research output. In Pakistan, the necessity for academics to carry out scholarly research has grown in the last several years (Garwe & Maganga, 2015). Academics are incentivized for completing the two tasks with incentives. A lot of professionals think academic research is pretentious, hazy, and irrelevant (Council of Europe Higher Education, 2019; DeAngelo et al., 2005). In Pakistani universities, usually, the faculty would publish in low-quality local journals for quick publications. The number of publications is considered one major output in considering the research success of academics; however, little consideration is given to the means of these publications and the impact they have on the community. Most publications happen due to personal and professional contacts rather than the actual content and quality of the research work. The state of research in Pakistani universities is of low quality (Muborakshoeva, 2015). The author further confirmed that "the culture of research at Pakistani universities and research conducted at some public universities was more in the line of being 'conformist' and 'routine', with a lack of rigorous 'critical approaches" (p. 4). Any type of research is evaluated based on a variety of factors, including how well it serves academic and industrial purposes, creates jobs, and increases in a company's stock price (Hoodbhoy, 2009). The quality of research did not follow the same trend as the number of publications increased. The number of patents obtained by HEIs and impact-factor publications could be used to objectively evaluate the caliber of publications in particular fields. A cross-case analysis of research on unethical behaviors that are common in all six cases—which serve as representative examples of the general population—is discussed below.

First, the most prevalent problem in research is the faculty's *lack of research initiatives*. Collecting data requires finances, but unfortunately, lack of research funding and prolonged delays in securing funds result in poor research output due to compromise on empirical data collection, disheartening and discouraging the faculty from engaging in quality research. Furthermore, the interference of political and religious parties in the affairs of the universities hampers their proper functioning, which includes conducting research freely at the institutions (Muborakshoeva, 2015). The faculty is therefore reluctant to publish due to these reasons and has been accused of holding back information concerning their research findings from academia and policymakers. According to Zardari (2014), the faculty conduct research primarily for the sake of promotion, professional jealousy among the faculty, a lack of collaboration between the faculty members, a lack of research culture in universities, tortuous procedures for acquiring research funds, and a gap between academia and industry. The issue has been expressed by an academic coordinator of a HE institute in the following words:

"Academics work alone on their research projects, and the results belong only to the researcher until they are offered a chance to be published in a journal. The faculty is apathetic in this regard, despite the fact that using the institute's funds makes it necessary to share the research findings with those who can profit from them. If appropriate seminars had been held, more people would have shared the knowledge." (F3)

Pakistani academics *withhold their research findings*. They are cautious and shrewd when it comes to making sure their study results are shared on the appropriate forum, which may encourage policy improvisation. In addition to the issue of misrepresenting research findings, the interviewees highlighted the weakness in the connections between academia and industry, which has led to a stagnation of innovation. As a result, the importation of pre-made models and solutions—such as laws, policies, structures, and procedures, among others— as well as their corresponding implementations have been an absolute disaster, especially when the models and theories are not tailored to the specific cultural traits of the local community.

Some interviewees were concerned about the *disconnect between universities and industry*. The research focused on the disconnect between universities and society. Most of the universities do not seem to focus on the issues of society, and as a result, society is also not aware of the research activities being carried out by academia, consequently, according to Muborakshoeva (2015), universities are becoming 'ivory towers'. The problem has been expressed by a vice chancellor of a university in the following words:

"Universities require an open and democratic environment and culture to flourish. If we do not receive support from society, we cannot maintain any expectations from academia. Universities cannot be standalone entities. The existing environment is limiting the freedom of the universities and the academics in several aspects that are not healthy for research." (D1)

If linkages between industry and academia are strengthened in a knowledge-based economy, they may be strategically significant (Conlé et al., 2021). The existence of fake journals is common in Pakistan. Academics are making good use of bogus journals through overnight publishing (Hoodbhoy, 2005). A fake journal is also referred to as a 'clone journal', which mimics or copies the title of a reputable journal to gain credibility and help academics publish their research by charging a high publication fee.

A second practice of research fraud is the *inflation of the publication count*. This issue is referred to in literature as the least publishable unit since it only discloses partial truths, which makes it difficult for readers to understand. Academics turn to this behavior because publishing comes with financial rewards in addition to the promise of career advancement. The use of incentives to divert attention has disastrous results, ultimately leading to academics' inability to publish in esteemed journals. The pressure on increasing publication count is itself a sign of a'symbolic branding culture'. As one interviewee stated:

"Some publications are limited to a few poorly written pages that were published thanks to the researchers' personal connections. A whole research unit is also divided into smaller parts, which are then published as individual units. Ambivalence governs its morality." (B3)

Third, *freeriding* and *plagiarism* have emerged as the main risks associated with academic publishing and research. These problems are expressed in different forms among Pakistani academics. Freeriding is an act when an individual gets the benefit of some work done in a group but does not contribute anything towards that group activity. Freeriding is an act when an individual gets the benefit of some work done in a group but does not contribute anything towards that group activity, e.g., if someone publishes a research paper and adds the names of his friends, colleagues, or family members to get some sort of benefit out of it. Free riding has a trade-off since coworkers and even family members, if they work in the same field, credit each other as authors. Point scoring is

the main driver behind this behavior, as it allows faculty members to share the benefits of this unethical practice by assisting in determining eligibility for upward career movement. For example:

"When a husband and wife work in the same field, one will take advantage of the other. Even though we know it is wrong and unethical, we still don't care about them." (B4)

In academia, plagiarism is stealing another person's idea, concept, text, technique, process, or model, whether it has been published or unpublished, and presenting it to others in such a way as to claim its originality and make them look new with an intent to misguide the reader. Sometimes people engage in self-plagiarism, which refers to reproducing something that originally belonged to them but omits the formal citation for it. Self-plagiarism is usually unintentional, but it violates the copyrights of the publisher and is considered an academic sin. A major annoyance to research standards is plagiarism (Saeed et al., 2011). Many people have trouble understanding what plagiarism is, and they typically view it from a narrow perspective. The disregard for research ethics has led scholars to engage in plagiarism (Sahi, 2012), and it has become one of the major concerns (Cheah, 2016). The respondents admit that this practice exists, as one of them stated:

"Since they are unaware of the research code of ethics, faculty and students engage in unethical behavior without feeling ashamed." (F3)

Perceived other moral and ethical issues

Academics operate in cliques, and because of clique norms, they are under pressure to hide some of their colleagues' rebellious behavior. This study highlights additional behavioral problems that aren't always supported by the scant literature on the subject. Such deemed moral and ethical concerns put pressure on the productivity and efficacy of academics because they did not fall under the purview of either research or teaching. They are discussed below.

Go-slow: Because it is typically encountered by workers in the production sector, the problem is relatively unique in nature and unknown in academia (Holden, 1989). According to one interviewee, seniors stifle juniors' potential because they fear the latter would deviate from the standards that they have established over the years. The situation portrayed by the interviewee fits well with the definition of 'go-slow'.

*"The senior faculty puts obstacles in the way of the younger faculty's desire to work at a faster pace. Everywhere this occurs, but particularly in public institutions." (*A2)

Seniors have already attained the position(s) and life goal(s) they have always desired, but younger academics are upbeat and vivacious because they are excited about their future careers. As a result, the seniors are only interested in maintaining their current performance level and are no longer driven to perform better. The seniors attempt to slow down the juniors in order to stifle their performance because they feel insecure about their plateaued performance.

Other issues: Other problems have also been noted, including the absence of academics from their offices, arrogant self-esteem, and disregard for the difficulties faced by their students. The interviewees' main points center on building rapport with students and providing student counseling, which is typically viewed as a secondary aspect of effective teaching.

It is common for academics to maintain their egos and take a bureaucratic approach to solving their students' problems. This is understandable in that academics believe their knowledge makes them superior to other people. Some academics discourage students from visiting their offices as a result. All the moral and ethical issues identified in this study are presented in Figure 2.
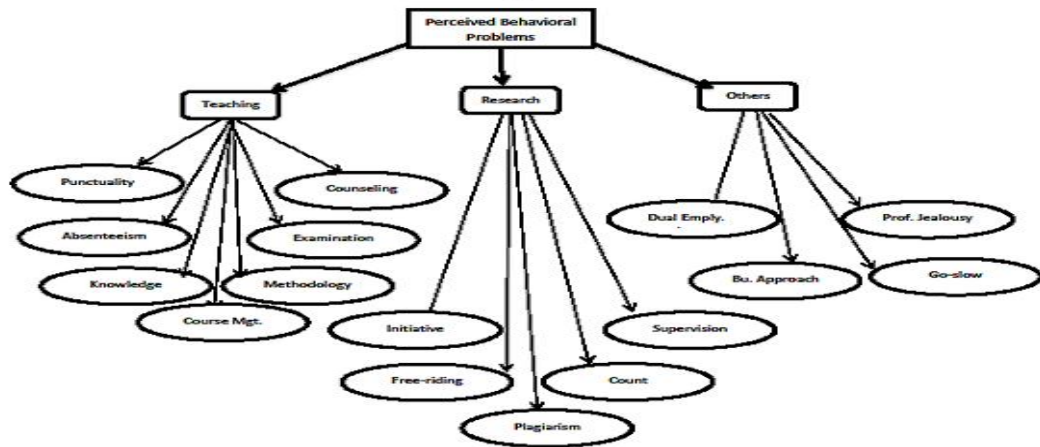
Figure 2: Coding in NVivo

Discussion

According to this study, inappropriate attitudes and values may be more to blame for Pakistani academics' intellectual advancement than the availability of resources. The majority of university instruction consists only of professors transcribing notes that they themselves had taken as students (Hoodbhoy, 2003). Mahmood and Shafique (2010) claim that while educators in developed nations train students to organize their thinking for future organizational decision-making, Pakistan's educational system has failed to instill logical and critical thinking in the minds of students (DeAngelo et al., 2005).

Ethical and moral problems among faculty can have a great impact on students' learning. The way instructors behave and engage with their students has a significant impact on the learning environment, student engagement and motivation, and academic success. Faculty members should make an effort to communicate more effectively with their students for their proper learning, both inside and outside the classroom (Henderson et al., 2019). For the learning process to be more effective and meaningful, faculty members should cultivate genuine passion and find ways to connect with students (Thornton et al., 2020). It is essential to adopt teaching strategies to accommodate the various learning preferences and needs of the students. To create an inclusive and student-centered learning environment, faculty members should adopt pedagogical approaches that include active learning, differentiated instruction, and a variety of assessment techniques. As pointed out by the respondents, the faculty have issues with time management. According to Uzir et al. (2020), time management issues can result in behavioral problems in the faculty. When the faculty is unable to manage their time properly, it can decrease their availability to the students, thus depriving them of the necessary coaching and mentoring, which is an important aspect of the faculty's job. Uzir et al. (2020) stress that the faculty should prioritize the students' learning and adopt time management strategies. By offering professional development opportunities, supporting networks, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement, institutions can address these behavioral issues. Faculty members can create a productive learning environment that encourages student engagement, motivation, and success by addressing these problems.

Faculty members also have moral and ethical problems with respect to research and publications, as pointed out by the respondents. This has an adverse effect on the objectivity and authority of academic work. Plagiarism, which is the unauthorized use or presentation of another person's thoughts, work, or words as one's own, is a significant problem (Tomar, 2022). Faculty members have a duty to uphold moral principles and make sure that original sources are given due credit. The truthful reporting of research results is another issue. The research findings are sometimes distorted, and readers may be misled by the fabrication or falsification of data, selective reporting, or cherry-picking of results (Singh et al., 2022). When conducting research, faculty members should put integrity and openness first while following strict procedures and accurately reporting their findings. Conflicts of interest have also been observed when faculty members have financial or personal interests that could influence their choices regarding their research and publications. Faculty members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and uphold objectivity in their work. The faculty is reported to go for quick publications that are substandard by using their personal and professional contacts, thus earning award money as well as inflating their publication count. The integrity of the academic community and the reliability of research and publications

depend heavily on upholding ethical principles, abiding by institutional rules and codes of conduct, and encouraging responsible and open research practices.

Faculty members' perceptions of moral and ethical issues span many facets of their professional responsibilities in addition to teaching and research (Chan, 2023). The interaction between faculty and students is one important area of concern. It is morally required to uphold appropriate boundaries, refrain from favoritism, and guarantee that all students receive equal opportunities and treatment. Academic rigor and fairness should be promoted, whereas cheating and academic misconduct should be discouraged by faculty members (Chan, 2023). Another ethical issue is the prudent use of institutional resources, such as university resources or research funding (Mohiuddin et al., 2022). When using these resources, faculty members should act in a transparent, accountable, and fair manner. Senior faculty members must prioritize the mentoring and support needs of their junior faculty members rather than using political tactics that could endanger their careers. By sharing their knowledge, expertise, and experience, senior faculty can support their junior counterparts in achieving professional success. A successful academic culture can be encouraged by creating a welcoming and cooperative environment, which would benefit the higher education sector. Instead of focusing on organizational politics, healthy relationships should be encouraged to build a strong and thriving academic community. It is thus crucial for the faculty to uphold high moral and ethical standards in all facets of their professional conduct.

Implications
Theoretical implications
The current study has contributed to the body of knowledge by looking at the behavioral issues of the faculty from the perspective of management in the higher education sector. One of the conclusions points to the faculty—not the management—as the source of the issue with their lack of research initiative. By ignoring the restrictions that could make this activity more difficult, management can contribute equally to the issue. The same can be looked at in other workplace behavioral issues that employees may have.

This paper makes a significant additional contribution to knowledge by demonstrating how, although it benefits both the faculty and the employer, rewarding faculty members for publishing more works may inadvertently encourage unethical behavior among these professionals. Faculty members benefit from having more publications because it increases their chances of being promoted and earns them awards. As a result, faculty members will not be promoted to professorial positions if they do not publish. Furthermore, because the evaluation score is partially based on research and publications, it may cause financial loss as well as performance issues for the faculty. The university's ranking is also influenced by the number of publications produced by its faculty. Therefore, although their interests are aligned, the faculty's unethical behavior is causing agency issues, as discussed in detail in the analysis section.

Practical implications
First, managers operating in a similar environment to that of Pakistan should recognize that, while depressing practices that impair faculty performance effectiveness, incentives are necessary to instill optimism in them about the good work they are doing. As things stand right now, the incentive system is divorced from the cultural and contextual elements of the workplace. In actuality, it is promoting the incorrect aspects of students' academic performance, which heightens their propensity for opportunistic behavior. The knowledge-intensive industry has its own characteristics, and managers need to be aware of these. They should also create incentive programs that are directly linked to work behaviors that advance organizational goals. In order to prevent academics from fulfilling their job responsibilities only partially, it is necessary to properly design incentive systems for multiple-tasking jobs that will protect academics' proportionate effort allocation among diverse activities.

Second, managers should not wait for some formal exercise, which usually occurs after the semester has ended, but rather make frequent visits to the classrooms or engage in casual conversations with students about how their course instructors are doing throughout the semester. The main goal of performance management is to gather ongoing feedback on employees' work from various sources and to act promptly to correct instances of inefficiency or ineffectiveness in order to get performance back on track. This in no way lessens the value of yearly reviews or any other popular appraisal system within an organization.

Policy implications

Two primary areas of concern that emerged from the analysis were the provision of incentives for quantitative work and issues related to information asymmetry. As a matter of policy, the principal—here, the HEC—must exercise extreme caution when creating incentives for the faculty, since sometimes they encourage undesirable workplace behaviors rather than positive ones. Throughout our analysis, we have provided evidence of this by choosing to emphasize teaching over other factors, inflating the number of publications, and freeriding. This also applies to the agency theory's premise of information asymmetry.

Limitations and Future Research

The fact that the data for this study were gathered from single people due to gender inequality in this setting is its first limitation. Future studies may examine the views of both sexes to determine whether there are any gender disparities in how moral and ethical issues in HE are perceived. This study's conclusions are limited to higher education institutions in the public sector. As a result, we do not assert that the study's conclusions can be applied universally. Because of the differences in trends and professions, conclusions from HEIs in the public sector may not be easily applicable to other public sector organizations. To determine whether cultures and context have an impact on the prevalence of behavioral issues in HE faculty, similar research can be done in the future in both developed and developing nations. The results can then be compared.

Conclusion

There are several reasons for the deteriorating quality of higher education in Pakistan, some of which can be directly attributed to the academics, who are the main stakeholders and shoulder the primary responsibility for imparting quality education. However, this does not mean and would be rather unmerited to fix the entire liability on academics, as other stakeholders are also involved. Due to direct as well as indirect impacts on the quality of HE, the flaws in the system need to be rectified. A large number of instructors are involved in academic deception without ever being challenged (Hoodbhoy, 2003). We discuss further theoretical, practical, and policy implications below.

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