

Classroom Practices of Teachers for Students' Moral Development: Islamic Studies Textbook Garde VIII

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This study was conducted to investigate teachers' practices in teaching the Islamic studies subject, aiming to enhance the moral development of grade VIII students. The goal of our study was to determine what teachers think about the impact of their teaching practices on the moral development of their students. Due to this, we employed a semi-structured qualitative interview approach for this study. Regarding the moral development of students, the researcher visited with six female teachers who taught Islamic studies to eighth graders during the 2023-24 session. The thematic method was employed for the interpretation of the results. This study revealed noteworthy findings about instructors' perspectives on their instructional methods and the impact of these practices on their students' morals. The study derived four main themes with sub-themes, which found: overall teaching and evaluation methods, including storytelling, questioning, providing examples from various sources, application of moral values in practical life, and engaging conversations with students, application of different languages for involvement of students, Involvement of Society in teaching learning process, application of audio-visual- aids, practicing research, practices according to need and development of an effective learning environment for students' moral development. Moreover, teachers emphasized the importance of providing meaningful examples before introducing a new topic and using persuasive techniques to motivate students. They also emphasized the importance of religious subjects, particularly Islamic studies, for the moral development of learners .

Keywords: teachers' practices, classroom practices, students' moral development, Islamic studies, Garde VIII.

Humans endeavor to determine what is right and wrong in cognition and behavior through notions of morality, which are subjective (based on individual or social opinions) as opposed to objective (grounded in empirical evidence and logical reasoning) (Bailey, Jones, & Clayton, 2021). According to Kohlberg, moral judgment would be encouraged by using the following principles;

1. Establishing an environment of respect for others in interactions between adults and learners by being democratic, collaborative, and sharing authority with them.
2. Letting learners participate in making decisions and help establishing the rules for the classroom.
3. Promoting ethical conversation in the classroom.
4. Research showed enhanced moral reasoning results from a participatory technique where learners ask questions and seek explanations, justifications, and suggestions. This method of conversation is linked to higher moral reasoning compared to fundamental dissatisfaction or controversial lectures. Small-group discussions foster moral reasoning from elementary school through higher education (Bergin & Bergin, 2011, p. 3).

Instructors' one-directional, regulated methods of information transfer do not foster a passion for the internal experience; instead, they advise starting as early as possible with the students' experiences rather than merely perusing and understanding the maps. Spirituality's domains are understandable apart from participation. The teacher's goal is for children to become independent thinkers who consider their existence, values, and the external factors that shape them. Moreover, their goal is to assist learners in becoming self-assured, accepting young adults by fostering appreciation for others, compassion, understanding of others' emotions, and the ability to recognize efforts at personal growth (Craft et al., 2001, p. 132). Increasing public awareness about Islamic values is only possible if textbooks for various subjects specifically for Islamic studies incorporate Islamic principles and parents and teachers play a significant role in shaping their children's moral and spiritual development (Thakur et al., 2022). The teacher's role is crucial in helping the children form their moral values. Moreover, the teacher's beliefs and how they teach significantly influence how these values are instilled. The teacher's beliefs directly or indirectly influence their thoughts, rules, choices, and approach to teaching. The perceptions of instructors' knowledge, skills, and abilities have been the subject of several research studies; however, these studies have not considered instructors' values. Every Country has developed its own set of moral standards and laws. In Pakistan, the official religion, which encompasses Islamic principles, history, and customs, served as the basis for moral education (Asif et al., 2020).

Objective of the Study

1. To determine teachers' practices in teaching the subject of Islamic studies to improve the moral development of students of grade VIII.

Question of the Study

1. What practices do elementary school instructors employ when imparting Islamic studies subject to students to foster their moral development?

Literature Review

Concept of Spirituality and Morals

Spirituality in connection to morals reflect how people behave, whereas practicing morals refers to the application of morality. Similarly, ethics is the study of human behavior from a theoretical, methodical, and logical perspective (Chowdhury, 2018). Society, spirituality, and culture have a strong influence on morals, values, and ethics (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1991, as cited in Chowdhury, 2018). Figure 1 showed the incremental steps of mora development.

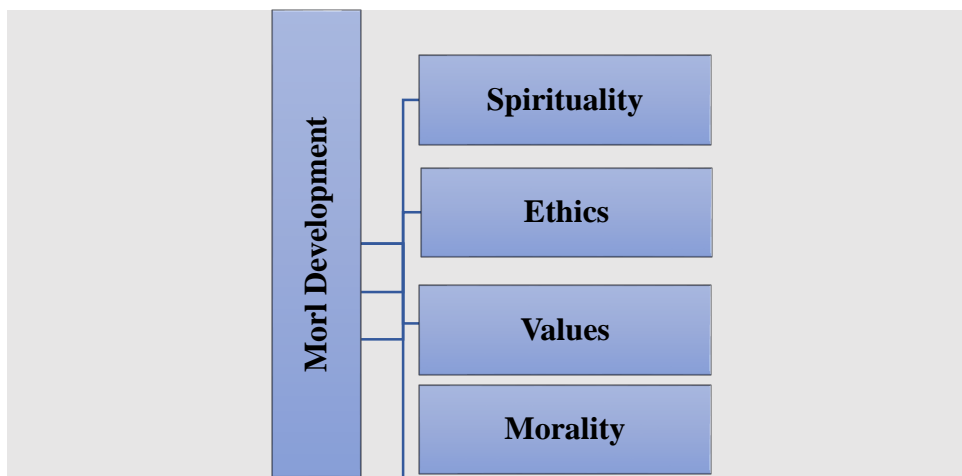


Figure 1: Incremental Steps of Moral Development (West & Jones, 2007, pp.34-35).

Similarly, ethics may have three different meanings. First, morality, or the universal principles of behavior that all rational beings desire for others to abide by, is widely understood to be synonymous with

ethics. Additionally, ethics is a firmly established area of philosophy that examines the origins of human standards and values and attempts to integrate them into theories about humans' personal and societal conditions. Lastly, professional ethics implies the unique behavior standards that people with a common interest follow. It is neither universal nor ethical theory. A profession's concept is closely linked to professional ethics (Chowdhury, 2018).

Morality

Morality is a branch of philosophy, the logically grounded study of the nature, causes, and principles of reality, knowledge, or values (Bailey, Jones, & Clayton, 2021). Likewise, morality is the philosophical field of ethics, also known as ethical philosophy, which examines the conceptual underpinnings and logical validity of such norms. The term "ethics" is now used to refer to specific moral codes or systems, as well as the empirical study of their development across time and the social, economic, and geographic contexts in which they emerged (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

The primary philosophical schools and their areas of study are:

- Morality is the human attempt to define right and wrong in thought and behavior. It resulted in a system or set of ideas about good vs. bad action.
- Morality is the foundation of any individual's or group's conviction in suitable or good behavior (Bailey et al., 2021).
- Moreover, morality is the set of principles that enable individuals to flourish peacefully within communities. Similarly, it is what society considers to be "right" and "acceptable (Morin & Susman, 2023).

Meaning and Definitions of Morality

Morality is the field of ethics derived from the Latin *moralis*, which means customs or manners. It reflects the current ideals that a culture or community has adopted. It examines whether a particular behavior is consistent with current values or, in some way, contradicts them. Furthermore, morality addresses what is right by employing five traditional criteria, i.e., Pleasure, Happiness, excellence, Creativity, and harmony (Bailey et al., 2021). (Bailey et al.,2021).

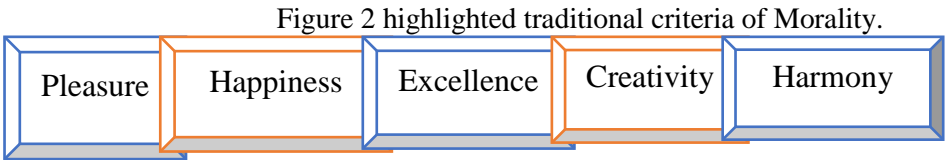


Figure 2: Traditional Criteria of Morality (Bailey et al., 2021).

Morals are the accepted norms that govern behavior, enabling individuals to coexist peacefully within organizations. What cultures acknowledge as correct and acceptable is said to be moral. People, in general, tend to behave decently and obediently. Morality often requires prioritizing the needs of society over one's personal, immediate needs. Amoral individuals or entities do not care about right or wrong. In contrast, immoral individuals or entities commit wicked deeds (Dotdash Meredith Publishers, 2023).

Similarly, morality encompassed the moral beliefs and practices, as well as the moral laws, precepts, or standards, of a culture, society, or religion. The philosophical field of ethics, also known as ethical philosophy, examines the conceptual underpinnings and logical validity of such norms. The term "ethics" is now used to refer to specific moral codes or systems, as well as the empirical study of their development across time and the social, economic, and geographic contexts in which they emerged (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

The researcher examined instructors' perspectives on the relevance of Islamic studies in shaping students' morals within the cultural context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Moreover, Morality is the conviction that specific actions are proper and appropriate while other behaviors are wrong. It is a set of guiding principles and values that broadly recognize how others should behave within a community or a specific group of individuals (Collins English Dictionary, 2023).

Likewise, moral development is the process by which we determine right and wrong as we mature and reach adulthood. It comprises our moral and religious principles, shaping our conduct and sense of civic duty (Moral Development: Definition, Examples & Stages, n.d.).

The researcher investigated student behavior about moral ideals in the classroom. Interviews with teachers were essential in revealing that pupils were acquiring moral principles in the classroom.

Moreover, a child's awareness and perception of social and personal values, correct and wrong, ethical standards, and interpersonal conduct are called their "moral development." Children acquire these values through a social and personal process that teaches them how to act in the community (What Is Moral Development | IGI Global, n.d). Similarly, moral development refers to the ideas, deeds, and emotions related to morality (Gray et al., 2012).

Need if Innovative Teaching methods (Literature based theme)

Issues of social justice as an indicator of moral development become nearly unavoidable. From the headlines of our daily newspapers to the discussions on street corners, socially conscious acts and objectives appear to be more prominent than they were in the past. The urge to abandon current patterns of behavior and adopt new techniques in the pursuit of a more equitable society for all is at the heart of many significant discussions (Thompson, 2022). Moreover, Nucci and Ilten-Gee's (2022) interactions with educators and learners revealed that when students are afforded opportunities to confront challenges, they consider them morally significant and view themselves as engaged in open dialogue with their peers; their involvement and quest for moral stances are authentic (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2022).

Certain aspects of Larry Nucci and Robyn Ilten-Gee's methodology need particular emphasis. Initially, they presented a perspective on morality and moral development that is inherently socially contextualized. This is significant since it highlighted the social framework in which moral actors may operate. Secondly, they identified moral education as a deliberate endeavor in which teachers must always participate, even when they may feel that they are not actively engaging in the continuing task. Thirdly, they positively transcend the individualist focus implied or expressed in some methods of moral instruction (Thompson, 2022).

The researcher found that educators' views, as expressed through their interviews, are that pupils' relationships with peers assist their moral development. The researcher would like to integrate Theme I from the findings of the current study with the relevant literature as described above in the context of teacher's practices. There were six participants.

Theme I: Overall teaching and evaluation practices (Findings of Current Study)

Most participants (6 out of 6) discussed their overall teaching and evaluation methods, including storytelling, questioning, providing examples from various sources, practical life experiences, and engaging conversations with students. They emphasized the importance of providing meaningful examples before introducing a new topic and using persuasive techniques to motivate students.

Some participants (3 out of 6) mentioned encouraging students to read a paragraph aloud, followed by a detailed explanation. Two participants (2 out of 6) reported using questioning techniques during the reading process, regularly asking questions to engage passive students and direct their attention to the content. These strategies were especially effective in motivating students toward the moral development aspects of Islamic Studies, which are grounded in both religious and social values. One participant shared:

"I involve students actively, and this practice has been very effective." (Participant E)

Few participants (3 out of 6) noted that their primary method for teaching moral development involved students telling stories. They also summarized the key points of the lesson at the end. One teacher mentioned:

"After the lesson, I always provide a summary and explain its relevance to the students." (Participant A)

Most participants (6 out of 6) indicated that exercises were conducted at the end of each chapter to reinforce the material, although this process was time-consuming. As one participant explained:

"We perform the exercises, but not all in one day." (Participant A)

Some participants (2 out of 6) mentioned that they assigned exercises after a detailed class discussion, while all six participants (6 out of 6) conducted written tests to assess students' understanding. Additional teaching methods for students' moral development included lectures on the practical significance of each topic, examples provided by the teacher, persuasive techniques, group discussions, and translation of Quranic verses. Two participants (2 out of 6) followed a "from simple to complex" teaching approach:

"I follow a method of teaching that moves from easy concepts to more complex ones." (Participants B and E)

Significance of Multiple Activities for Teaching and Learning (Theme from Literature)

Teachers in our formal educational system utilize textbooks as a resource to support students' learning and provide them with the knowledge that nourishes their developing minds (Nazir & Pakeeza, 2023). Textbooks for various subject have significantly impacted how the curriculum is interpreted and represented. In the majority of classrooms, the textbook for different subjects that is employed has a significant influence on both the intended and implemented curricula. This effect is especially noticeable when educators who develop the curriculum write the textbook. Textbooks are not the only factor that affects learners and their schooling; they comprise the majority of the curriculum in many regions of the world. When middle school teachers teach subjects beyond their areas of specialization, as is frequently the case, the importance of relying on textbooks increases (Niaz, 2013). Islamic studies education can help students by providing them with the tools to assess and improve their quality of life.

Significance of Multiple Activities in Teaching Islamic Studies (Findings of the Current Study)

Similarly, the researcher found that the Application of different languages facilitates student involvement. Some participants (3 out of 6) highlighted the use of the mother tongue or national language to increase student involvement. For example, one participant shared:

"I found that engaging the students in class was challenging at times. To help them understand and pay attention, I sometimes switched between Pashto and Urdu, as some students were not showing interest." (Participant B)

Involvement of Society in teaching-learning process

Most participants (6 out of 6) mentioned encouraging student engagement with society by assigning tasks involving discussions with parents, siblings, madrasa teachers, and other community members.

Application of Audio-visual aids

Some participants (2 out of 6) used visual aids, such as charts, to enhance their understanding. One teacher explained:

"I used a simple chart to help students grasp concepts and foster a sense of justice." (Participant C)

Practicing Research for Students' Moral Development

Few participants (2 out of 6) incorporated research into their moral development, encouraging students to consult reference books, maintain diaries, and utilize materials from higher-level classes. Two participants noted:

"We encourage research through chart work, reading relevant reference books, and using diaries, sometimes even looking into books from senior or junior classes."(Participants D and E)

Developing an Effective Learning Environment

Several participants (3 out of 6) emphasized the importance of preparing students for the lesson before teaching. One participant explained:

"When I enter the class, I always prepare the students by explaining the meaning of key concepts, which helps them understand the entire lesson. I also break the lesson down into smaller points that I focus on to make it easier for students to grasp. This way, students can apply what they learn daily." (Participant D)

Practices according to need

Most participants (6 out of 6) described using practices aligned with the lesson's requirements and designed to engage students actively. As one participant noted:

"We implement all necessary practices, and students feel satisfied when we focus on the key aspects of the lesson." (Participants B and E)

Settlement of Students for Moral Development

Some participants (2 out of 6) emphasized the importance of strategically placing students within the classroom to promote moral development. One teacher shared:

"Some students come from homes where they are already morally well-behaved, while others may not. I place the less disciplined students with those who are morally upright, and I take on a nurturing role, almost like a sister, to guide their development." (Participant E)

Teacher-Student Friendly Discussion Forums

Few participants (2 out of 6) reported using friendly discussion forums to foster students' moral development. These forums allowed for open communication and engagement between students and teachers. Two participants explained:

"There are designated days for discussions between students and teachers. Sometimes, I encourage student-led discussions. I always link the day's lesson with prior knowledge to help students make connections." (Participants A and E)

Awareness of Islamic Moral Values (Literature based theme)

In comparison, Islam exhorts us to mold our beliefs to benefit people and society. To achieve this, we must increase public awareness of Islamic values through education (Thakur et al., 2022). According to a study, even if educators support the development of "good" people, these people may nonetheless act in ways that reinforce unethical structural or systemic outcomes. By combining a social justice-focused understanding of systemic patterns with a moral education-focused emphasis on the results of one's actions, the discussion successfully demonstrates the value of contextual knowledge in evaluating moral behavior. It emphasizes the significance of moral education in encouraging a dedication to gaining crucial perspectives on one's social status and its positive and adverse effects (Thompson, 2022).

The researcher further integrated Theme II of the current study to highlight the significance of teaching practices in establishing a social justice-focused system.

Theme II: Teaching Activities and Practices for Students' Moral Development / Teacher Stories

Moral Development Practices in School Assembly

Some participants (2 out of 6) mentioned implementing different practices for moral development during the school assembly. These included reciting Quranic verses with translations and discussing their themes. Two participants reported:

"The assembly is an important platform for students to learn about the Quran and Islam. We recite Quranic verses with translation and teach moral lessons. On Fridays, we focus on the significance of Friday prayers; on other days, we explore various Islamic teachings related to morality." (Participants B and E)

Respect for Islamic Books in the Quran and Hadith Sections

A few participants (2 out of 6) described how they encouraged students to show respect for Islamic books, Quranic verses, and Hadiths. One teacher shared:

"We often find Islamic books scattered around, but we emphasize the importance of respecting them. When teaching Quranic verses, I always remove my shoes, sit on the floor, and encourage my students to do the same." (Participant C)

Another participant explained:

"I taught my students to respect Islamic texts by practicing what I preached. I would remove my shoes and sit on the floor during lessons on Quran and Hadith, and many of the students began adopting this practice in their daily lives." (Participant A)

Additionally, one participant compared this practice to how members of other religious groups show respect for their sacred spaces:

"I used to explain how, in Hinduism, people remove their slippers and ring a bell when entering a temple to show respect. I told my students that as Muslims, we should treat our Islamic textbooks." (Participant C)

Application of Hadiths in Teaching

A few participants (2 out of 6) shared personal stories about practicing Hadiths during their student years and how they now use similar methods with their students. One teacher reflected:

"When I was an MA student in Islamic Studies, my teacher, Fatima from Swabi, used to incorporate two or three Hadiths into each lecture, and she always prepared them in advance. This method helped us memorize the Hadiths because we were familiar with them before the class. Now, as a teacher, I use the same approach, and it has proven effective in encouraging students to internalize and apply Hadiths in their daily lives." (Participant D)

Teachers' students' Friendly interaction

A few participants (2 out of 6) discussed their approach to interacting with students in a friendly and approachable manner, which also helped promote moral development. One participant shared:

"When teaching the section on beliefs, I tell my students how fortunate they are to have access to this knowledge at such a young age. I explained to them that we were not as fortunate in the past and had no awareness of concepts like the Day of Judgment or accountability for our actions. I encourage them to internalize their beliefs and avoid the mistakes I made in my youth." (Participant A)

Developing a sense of hope in students

Most participants (6 out of 6) discussed their efforts to help students develop a sense of hope. One teacher shared:

"Many students are often feeling hopeless. I remind them that good and bad times come into everyone's life. These moments may pass, but through all of them, we must turn to Allah in prayer." (Participant C)

Developing a Sense of Gratefulness to Allah Almighty

Some participants (2 out of 6) mentioned using examples to cultivate the value of gratitude toward Allah. One teacher explained:

"We should never be ungrateful to Allah. I often tell the story of a sheikh who had no shoes. One day, he saw a man without legs walking in the mosque. The sheikh thanked Allah for his feet, realizing how much he had to be grateful for. This example always made me tear up and reflect on my blessings." (Participant C)

Examples of Fate and Hard Work through Cooking and Eating

Some participants (3 out of 6) used everyday examples to help students understand the connection between fate and hard work. One teacher described:

"I tell my students that if food is in my fate, it will not magically appear in my mouth while lying in bed. I must get up, cook, and serve myself. It is your fate, but you must also work hard for it." (Participant C)

Hard Work and Success are Interconnected

A few participants (3 out of 6) used the example of heaven to explain the importance of hard work in achieving success:

"If success is destined for you, Allah has already written it. But you must still work hard to achieve it, because, as Allah says, there is no paradise without effort." (Participant C)

Promoting Moral Development through Personal Classroom Activities

The majority of participants (6 out of 6) shared their classroom activities designed to foster students' moral development. One teacher stated:

"I always remind my students that we are all the same before Allah, regardless of our differences. On the Day of Judgment, we will all stand together and must help one another. If a classmate is hungry, we should share what we have to eat. I model this by sharing what I have with my students." (Participant A)

Another teacher shared their personal experience to motivate students who were not offering prayers:

"I told my students about when I neglected my prayers and lied to my parents about it. I explained that this was a mistake and urged them not to follow in my footsteps. When I asked the class if they were praying regularly, many said they were." (Participant B)

Additionally, several participants emphasized the importance of honoring teachers as an act of reverence and as a means of fulfilling human rights. One participant noted:

"I remind students that respecting their teachers is part of their worship, as is fulfilling all our human obligations." (Participants B, C, and E)

Encouraging Acts of Charity

Some participants (2 out of 6) encouraged students to be generous with their excess belongings. They explained:

"If you have more than you need, you should share with others. And if you are unable to help financially, do not hesitate to ask me for assistance." (Participants A and D)

Multiple Practices for Engaging Students

Some participants (2 out of 6) described how they involved students in discussions and storytelling to enhance their learning. One teacher shared:

"I invite students to share stories about the Prophets and Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ. This not only teaches them but also helps me learn from their insights." (Participant A)

Another participant explained how they used storytelling and student involvement to engage uninterested students:

"Some students were disengaged during my lessons, so I used storytelling and student participation to capture their attention and make the content more relatable." (Participant B)

Group Activities and Practical Involvement

Most participants (4 out of 6) employed group activities and interactive methods to promote moral development in students, particularly in the context of the principle of *"Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi Anil Munkar"* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). Some examples of these activities include:

- Organizing speech competitions among students
- Encouraging interaction and collaboration between students
- Using books and media (internet, YouTube, TikTok) for research
- Engaging students in class discussions on relevant moral topics
- Assigning tasks involved discussions with family members and the broader society (parents, siblings).

One participant explained:

"I organized group activities where students were tasked with practically dividing Zakat, including a mathematical solution on the board. We also practiced the Labbaik response for five minutes in class." (Participant E)

Teachers' Stories for Societal Moral Values

Most participants (6 out of 6) shared personal stories to illustrate societal moral values. One teacher explained:

"When teaching moral and societal values, I asked my students about their parents' work at home and how they contribute. One student shared that she helps her family by sewing, which enables her family to save money." (Participant C)

Another teacher reflected on their childhood and used it to teach students the consequences of dishonesty:

"I shared my experience of stealing bread as a child because I did not have guidance. I told my students that stealing, or cheating from others, is wrong, and they should avoid repeating my mistakes." (Participant A)

Additionally, one participant discussed how they used the example of helping people with disabilities to teach compassion:

"I asked my students how they treat disabled people and whether they ignore them. Most students admitted they did not care for them as they should. I reminded them that helping disabled individuals is a test from Allah, and we must offer assistance whenever possible." (Participant C)

Teacher as Role Model

One teacher emphasized the importance of being a role model, especially for students in the *Islamic Studies* class:

"As a teacher of Islamic Studies, I know that my students look up to me as a role model. Whenever I enter the class, I check to see if the students are wearing headscarves. If anyone is not, I gently remind them that covering their heads is a sin and should be practiced." (Participant E)

Teachers' guidance for moral development

Some participants (2 out of 6) reported consistently guiding their students outside the classroom to promote moral development. One teacher shared:

"Every day, for five to ten minutes, I would remind students to go directly home after school without looking back. I explained that even if they were looking for a friend or checking on a younger sibling, people might misinterpret it, thinking they were looking at men. While I do not suggest they have looked at anyone with wrong intentions, avoiding such situations is important." (Participant B)

Another participant emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of group within the classroom:

"I told my students that, as a class, we should support each other. If a student is struggling to pay admission fees or buy clothes, the others should help. The more fortunate students need to be motivated by this and support their needy classmates. Even without direct instructions, they begin to understand and help each other." (Participant A)

One participant used a story to teach about honesty and integrity:

"I used the example of a shopkeeper who sells goods with a torn cloth over the merchandise, which is sinful. I explained that a true seller must always be transparent with the buyer about the condition of the items." (Participant C)

Another participant used examples from everyday life to teach compassion:

"I told the students that there are orphans in their class, and when they take more than their share of the snacks, the orphans have nothing. So, I encouraged them to share, for example, giving a portion of their chips to a classmate in need. This teaches them the importance of helping others, such as assisting disabled classmates or helping those in need." (Participant B)

Another teacher shared the story of Hazrat Ayesha R.A to instill values of modesty and integrity:

"I told them about Hazrat Ayesha, how she was accused of something unjustly, and how Allah revealed Qur'anic verses to clear her name. This story helped them understand the importance of maintaining integrity in the face of accusations." (Participant E)

Additionally, one teacher emphasized the importance of kindness in daily interactions:

"I encouraged the children to call each other with kind and affectionate names, like Guriya or Gulab. This simple act fosters love and strengthen relationships." (Participant E)

Character Formation Through Various Subjects (literature-based theme)

Every subject, as well as the procedures and structures of the school community, should intentionally promote a spiritual component. Every subject should participate in some capacity in open-ended inquiry that reflects on purpose and examines attitudes, values, and beliefs. According to Professor Ken Robinson, creativity in educational settings is a level of excellence and ability that transcends a single subject and encompasses all aspects of instruction, the school's social structure or ethos, and the interaction among instructors and students. Helping young people become more productive in global affairs means that their understanding of the external environment and themselves will become more profound and comprehensive (Craft et al., 2001, p. 128). Character formation is among the objectives of the National Education Policy 2017–2025, which is based on the main dimensions of "Taleem" (Learn, Apply, and Analyze Knowledge), "Tarbiyah" (Social, Technical, Moral, and Ethical Training), and "Tazkiyah" (Purifying the Soul). Character formation may also be founded on fundamental Islamic concepts linked with moral rules applicable to everyone (Mushtaq et al., 2023). Spiritual and moral development must be integrated with educational practices that extend beyond simply imparting knowledge about world religions and prescribing moral

guidelines. The national curriculum acknowledges this as significant (West & Jones, 2007, pp. 13-14). Islamic education is fundamentally more than just learning facts; it emphasizes moral behavior and the development of character (tahdhib al-nafs) through divine awareness. The goal of Islamic education, or tarbiyah Islamiyyah, is to develop a whole person, or Insan-i-Kamil, who reflects religious and moral principles in accordance with divine direction (Nasrulloh, & Kholis, 2025).

The researcher integrated themes III and VI of the current study with the literature to highlight the significance of the Islamic Studies subject for students' moral development.

Theme III: The Significance of Islamic Studies for Students' Moral Development: Teacher's Individual Views

The majority (6/6) of participants expressed that Islamic Studies plays a crucial role in students' moral development. They highlighted its significance in shaping students' ethical understanding:

"Islamic Studies is fundamental to our moral development. As Muslims, we must learn Islamic Studies not just theoretically but as a practical guide for life. We need to introduce this subject to our students to help them understand why it is essential and how it motivates us to be better Muslims. It is a challenging subject that requires deep knowledge." (Participant A)

"Islamic Studies is a subject that requires deep learning and reflection." (Participants B and E)

"Islamic Studies is not just important for this worldly life but also for life after. It is the book of ethics that guides our actions." (Participant D)

"I often use the example of how even the smallest part of a matter cannot be ignored. Similarly, Islamic teachings are everlasting and essential for our moral development." (Participant C)

VI: Effective and Ineffective Methods / Practices for Students Moral Development

Sub-theme I: Impact of Assembly Preaching on Students' Moral Development

Some participants (2/6) observed that announcements made during school assemblies regarding students' lost belongings had a positive impact on fostering a sense of accountability among students. This practice was deemed effective in promoting moral development:

"When a student found something and publicly acknowledged it, she would confirm the item with her teachers. For this, other students would applaud and commend her for doing a good deed." (Participants B and E)

Returning Lost Expensive Items

Participants also noted that students were encouraged to return valuable or significant items to their rightful owners:

"Whether it was a valuable item or a large sum of money, students would make sure to return it to the concerned person." (Participants B and E)

Motivation through Rewards for Practicing Moral Values:

Some participants (2/6) mentioned that rewards served as a strong motivator for students to practice moral values, such as honesty and integrity in handling lost belongings:

"We presented awards to students who handed over found items to teachers." (Participants B and E)

Others emphasized that rewards motivated students to act ethically, especially regarding issues of ownership and respect for others' belongings:

"Yes, rewards motivate students. Everyone at the school notices, and teachers praise them for their actions." (Participants B and E)

Effective Methods for Promoting Moral Development through Islamic Studies

Most participants (4/6) identified practical methods for promoting students' moral development through Islamic Studies, including lectures, persuasive presentations, discussions, questioning, examples, and practical activities. On the other hand, a smaller group (3/6) found that methods such as lesson summaries, diary writing (checked by parents), and storytelling were also practical in enhancing students' understanding of moral values.

Sub-theme II: Awareness and Understanding through Examples

The majority (6/6) of participants highlighted the effectiveness of using persuasive methods, examples, and detailed explanations to teach students about Islamic beliefs. Teachers stressed the importance of making students aware of core concepts such as the purpose of life, the role of worship, and the guidance offered by the Holy Prophets:

"The most effective method is ensuring students understand who our Creator is, why we were born, whom we should worship, and why we follow the examples of our Holy Prophet (A.S). To lead a better life, we must devote time to the Quran, understand it, and act according to its teachings." (Participants A, B, and E)

Some participants (2/6) described their approach to teaching charity (Zakat) by directly addressing the students who were eligible for assistance. By openly discussing these students' needs, they ensured that no one felt uncomfortable:

"An effective method is to announce the names of students who need Zakat or assistance, either individually or collectively, so they do not feel uncomfortable." (Participant E)

Other participants (3/6) cited the overall effectiveness of lecture demonstrations, examples, questioning, and group discussions in conveying key Islamic teachings, with a particular focus on promoting good actions and avoiding bad ones:

"In my class, we discussed how to encourage good actions and avoid bad ones, just like the teachings of Amr Bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil)." (Participants B, D, and E)

Sub-theme III: Ineffective Methods for Teaching

Most participants (6/6) identified reading assignments without teacher explanation, keynotes, or direct guidance as ineffective methods for motivating students to adopt moral values. Some teachers acknowledged that they had used these methods in the past but found them ineffective:

"I have applied this method before, starting with reading assignments, but I have learned that such methods need more explanation and support to be effective." (Participants A, B, C, D, and E)

Implications

1. Educators can offer explicit explanations, engage in collaborative conversations, and provide systematic supervision to facilitate the successful internalization of moral principles by students.
2. Future studies may investigate the enduring effects of various moral instruction methodologies on students' moral growth.
3. Comparative research can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of moral teaching methodologies across different educational institutions.
4. Teacher education initiatives may focus on equipping educators with practical tools and strategies for moral instruction.

- 5. Policymakers may contemplate amending the Islamic Studies subject to incorporate additional participatory and pragmatic moral development practices.
- 6. Subsequent studies may investigate the impact of parental involvement and social involvement on the moral development of students.

Method

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach to achieve this target, conducting interviews with teachers in girls' government schools who taught Islamic studies to grade VIII students. In addition, Coding was used following thematic analysis.

The researcher employed an interpretive paradigm in conjunction with a phenomenological qualitative research design. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with educators who instructed grade VIII pupils on the topic of Islamic studies.

The interpretive paradigm is gaining prominence as it enables the accommodation of diverse viewpoints and interpretations of reality. Interpretivists claim that the interpretation of data collected depends critically on one's understanding of the setting in which any type of research is carried out. Interpretivist researchers, on the other hand, understand the "broader context of human experience. Interpretivist researchers use participants' perspectives, personal experiences, and backgrounds to reveal reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This research focused on the phenomenon of moral development in eighth-grade students through the lens of Islamic studies. The researcher also examined how teachers promoted the moral development of students through their classroom practices and how students perceive the significance of Islamic studies and teachers' practices in encouraging their moral development.

Sampling/Participants of the Study

The research population consisted of teachers instructing Islamic studies to grade VIII pupils throughout the 2023-24 academic session. The researcher selected a sample based on her visits to six accessible schools in the Swabi area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The researcher subsequently picked a sample of six teachers from three higher secondary schools. Each school had two parts, with distinct teachers instructing the subject of Islamic studies in each section. The researcher employed a purposive sampling method to select teachers from government higher secondary schools. Qualitative research often utilizes this method to identify and select instances with the most significant information, ensuring that resources are used as effectively as possible. This entails identifying and selecting individuals or groups who are knowledgeable and skilled in a particular area of expertise. In addition to knowledge and experience, the purposive sampling technique emphasizes the importance of availability, openness, readiness to participate, and the capacity for clear, expressive, and thoughtful communication of views and viewpoints (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Similarly, the researcher collected data from six teachers of three higher secondary schoolwho taught Islamic studies to grade VIII students for the 2023-24 sessions. So, six Islamic Studies teachers of grade VIII were the study participants in the interview process. Each class had two sections labeled A and B, and two experts taught each section. Accordingly, the researcher examined interview transcripts obtained from five instructors who taught Islamic studies to eighth-grade students during the 2022–2023 school year. Table 1 showed Sample of the current study.

Table 1
Sample of the Study

S. No	Province and District		Total number of contacted GGHS Schools	Total number of Teachers taught Islamic Studies to Grade VIII (2022-23)	Total number of Teachers relevant to research objectives
1	Khyber	Pakhtunkhwa, Swabi	03	06	06

Semi-Structured Interviews

Similarly, the researcher conducted Semi-Structured interviews. This type of interview helped the researcher to maintain a flexible environment. In a Semi-Structured interview, the interviewer uses a guide with particular questions arranged by theme; however, these questions are not always asked in that sequence. However, when and how a question is posed is determined by the flow of the interview rather than the order in a guide (Bailey, 2017). An interview guide comprising specific questions was organized based on the specified themes identified through the Islamic Studies subject for eighth grade. However, the questions were not posed in that order; instead, the researcher followed the requirements of the current data situation provided by the respondents. Every interview lasted for over an hour. To keep teachers relaxed, the researcher visited them in locations where they felt confident. Following the interviews, all records were transcribed and employed to support the data collected from the Islamic Studies subject for grade VIII in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Data Collection Process

The interview guide was prepared using themes and codes from the Islamic Studies grade VIII subject. The researcher then conducted semi-structured interviews with six of them. The researcher prepared an interview guide that included triggering and follow-up questions. Experts certified the developed interviewing guide. The validated guide was communicated to the participants for consent based on ethical considerations. The researcher personally visited all the schools and collected data. Although the researcher followed a guide, the questions asked depended on how the interview was going. A question scheduled for later in the interview was asked earlier; some questions were skipped. In addition, as this research was based on the interpretive paradigm, it aided in developing a new set of themes in light of the participants' interpretations of the phenomenon of "Moral Development" among students through Islamic studies and classroom practices. The researcher interpreted the meaning of the phenomena under study, which further provided an answer to the research's final purpose and question. So, a novel list of moral values for students' ethical development was constructed. The researcher found teachers with different qualifications for teaching Islamic Studies at the elementary level. Three teachers were specialists in Islamic Studies, three were senior certified teachers (S.C.T.), and one was a physical education teacher (P.E.T.).

Three teachers' interviews were recorded in Pashto, as per their preference, while the remaining three were recorded in Urdu and then translated into English. The researcher then validated the translations from an English expert. The total interview time for each participant was 90 minutes. Following these interviews, the researcher analyzed the responses to identify key themes related to the teachers' perspectives on fostering moral development through Islamic Studies.

The interpretive paradigm applies to the research, as it can provide detailed insights into human situations. Researchers may use data analysis to investigate, justify, communicate, and put the data in the participant's perspective or thought process to recreate the text's intended meaning (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). So, the thematic method was used to analyze the data. Moral development aspects were checked in the subject of Islamic Studies teaching practices. Using a three-stage thematic approach, the researchers first coded lines by line, then arranged the free codes to create descriptive themes, and finally, they developed analytical themes (Shams, Ajmal, & Jumani, 2021). The principal codes derived from semi-structured interviews for students' moral development were 04, including teaching practices, teachers' activities and modes of practice, the significance of Islamic studies, and effective and ineffective teaching methods with corresponding subcodes. Figure 3 highlighted the research methodology followed in the current study.

Qualitative Research Design

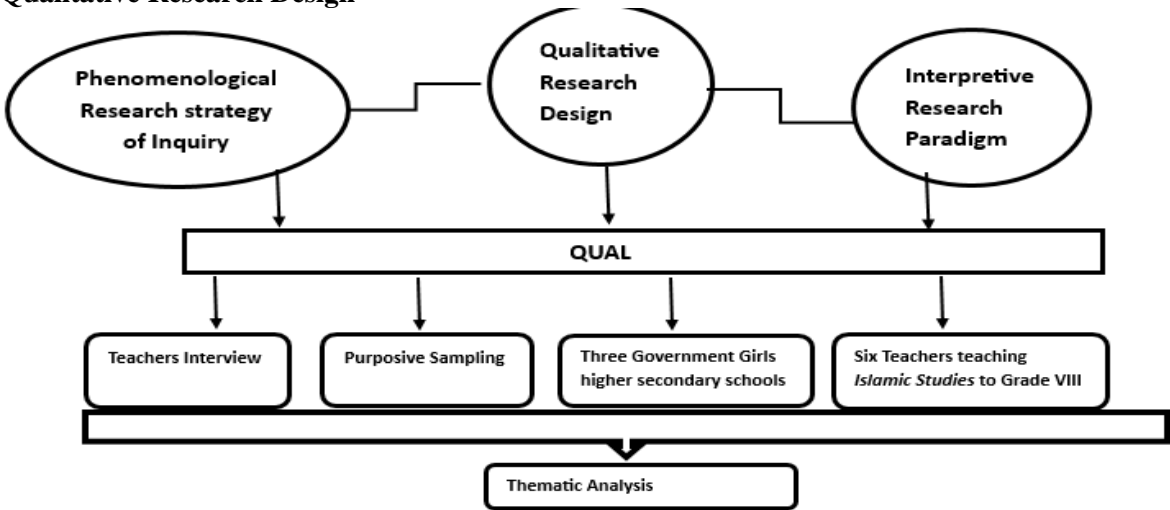


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of Research Methodology (Creswell,2009).

Table 2.
Demographic Information of the Participants

S.No	Participants	Designation	Qualification	Gender	Experience	Subject	Institution
1.	1.	S. CT	Pushtu	Female	27 Years	Islamic Studies to grade VIII	Higher Secondary School
2.	2.	S. CT	Islamic Studies	Female	27 Years	Islamic Studies to grade VIII	Higher Secondary School
3.	3.	S.TT	Islamic Studies	Female	9 Years	Islamic Studies to grade VIII	Higher Secondary School
4.	4.	S. CT	Urdu	Female	28 Years	Islamic Studies to grade VIII	Higher Secondary School
5.	5.	P.ET	Islamic Studies	Female	10 Years	Islamic Studies to grade VIII	Higher Secondary School
6.	6.	S.TT	Islamic Studies	Female	15 Years	Islamic Studies to Grade VIII	Higher Secondary School

Ethical Consideration

The researcher contacted the Head and teachers of three higher secondary schools and then, after their permission, provided the interview protocol to teachers who taught Islamic Studies to grade VIII for their consent. Teachers were approached in person, and an informal meeting was held to obtain their consent and learn about their experiences in teaching Islamic Studies to grade VIII during session 2023-24. The teachers confirmed their consent for the interviews to be recorded. Figure 4 provided the main themes derived from Teachers’ Semi-Structured Interviews.

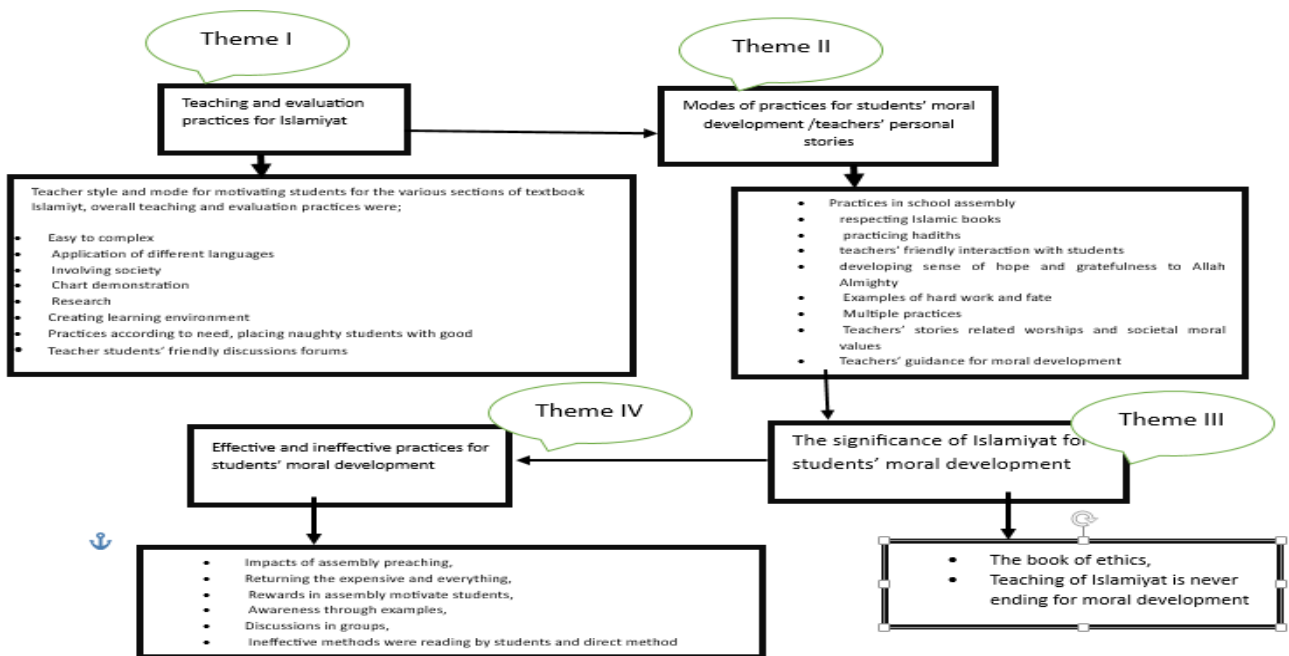


Figure 4:Themes Derived from semi structured Interviews

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study utilized a qualitative research methodology and carried out semi-structured interviews with educators who taught Islamic Studies to eighth-grade students throughout the 2023-24 academic session. The present study was undertaken to investigate the moral growth of students. Comparable to another research study that utilized a qualitative research design based on descriptive ethnography to investigate the dissemination of Islamic educational principles inherent in the Tembang Sorong Serah Aji Krame tradition of the Sasak community in Lombok, Indonesia (Nasrulloh, & Kholis, 2025). Similarly, the methodology and findings of the study are similar to the study conducted by Shams and Lodhi, (2024). The previous study was also qualitative in nature which described that students need to bring moral development contents into action for society's betterment at the local, national and international levels. The previous study also highlighted that teachers may perform their role as practical Muslims and role models for students' moral development while teaching the contents of Islamic Studies for grade VIII. They need to teach social media to motivate students towards the preaching of Islam in the light of the present age needs.

This study examined teachers' perceptions for students' moral development through their classroom activities. The study employed a qualitative method, including semi-structured interviews with the teachers who taught Islamic studies to grade VIII—similarly, Thakur et al., (2022) described the significance of textbook for the subject of Islamic Studies and the involvement of society in students' moral development. He stated that increasing public awareness about Islamic values is only possible if textbooks for various subjects incorporate Islamic principles and parents and teachers play a significant role in shaping their children's moral and spiritual development. Likewise, certain aspects of Larry Nucci and Robyn Itlen-Gee's methodology were found to be similar to the findings of this study. Initially, they present a perspective on morality and moral development that is inherently socially contextualized. This is significant since it highlights the social framework in which moral actors may operate (Thompson, 2022). This study concluded that teaching practices in Islamic studies for grade VIII focused on moral development through storytelling, questioning, examples from various sources, practical life experiences, and engaging conversations with students. Thompson (2022) also reflected on other aspects of Larry Nucci and Robyn Itlen Gees's work, which are similar to the findings of this study. They identify moral education as a deliberate endeavor in which teachers must always participate, even when they may feel that they are not actively engaging in the continuing task. Thirdly, they

positively transcend the individualist focus implied or expressed in some methods of moral instruction. This study concluded that Teachers emphasized the importance of using persuasive techniques and examples to motivate students and capture their interest. Likewise, the previous study described that the Application of the following principles would encourage moral judgment from Kohlberg's point of view such as; 1. Establishing an environment of respect for others in interactions between adults and learners by being democratic, collaborative, and sharing authority with them. 2. Let learners participate in making decisions and assist in establishing the rules for the classroom. 3. Promote ethical conversation in the classroom. 4. Research shows enhanced moral reasoning results from a participatory technique where learners ask questions and seek explanations, justifications, and suggestions. This method of conversation is linked to higher moral reasoning compared to fundamental dissatisfaction or controversial lectures. Small group discussions fostered moral reasoning from elementary school through higher education (Bergin & Bergin, 2011, p. 383).

The involvement of students in different languages, strategic placement within the classroom, and teacher-student-friendly discussion forums were also discussed in the current study. Teaching activities and practices for moral development in schools included reciting Quranic verses, respecting Islamic books, applying Hadiths, and fostering a sense of hope. Teachers shared personal stories about practicing Hadiths, encouraging students to internalize their beliefs and feel gratitude towards Allah. Personal classroom activities were also discussed, including sharing what they have with others and encouraging regular prayer. Honoring teachers as an act of worship and fulfilling human rights was emphasized. The study examined various practices and personal stories that foster students' moral development, including generosity, group activities, interactive methods, and serving as a role model. Teachers also guided their students outside the classroom to promote moral development, such as going home after school without looking back, fostering a sense of group, teaching honesty and integrity, and promoting kindness in daily interactions. Islamic studies are essential for students' moral development as they shape their ethical understanding and motivation. Effective methods for promoting moral development include assembly preaching, encouraging students to return lost belongings, and rewards for practicing moral values. Ineffective teaching methods include assigning reading without providing clear explanations, keynotes, or direct guidance from the teacher. Similarly, another study stated that the teacher's role is crucial in helping the kids form their values. Moreover, the teacher's beliefs and how they teach significantly influence how these values are instilled. The teacher's beliefs directly or indirectly influence their thoughts, rules, choices, and approach. The perceptions of instructors' knowledge, skills, and abilities have been the subject of several research studies; however, these studies have not considered instructors' values. Every Country has developed its own set of moral standards and laws. In Pakistan, the official religion, which incorporates Islamic principles, history, and customs, is the basis for moral education (Asif et al., 2020).

Recommendations

The findings of this study yield numerous recommendations to improve teaching procedures in Islamic Studies for the advancement of students' moral development:

1. **Application of Teaching methods through Educators:** Educators can integrate narrative, inquiry, and practical experiences to make moral lessons more relevant and impactful.
2. **Students:** Empowering students to engage in discussions and reflections on moral challenges might enhance their comprehension of moral ideals. Students may collaborate with their instructors to promote their moral development on both the school and societal levels.
3. **School:** Schools must incorporate practical exercises, including collaborative tasks, role-playing, and real-life examples from the Hadiths, to reinforce moral lessons. Schools may cultivate an environment that fosters moral education through the application of organized activities, such as assembly messages, incentives for virtuous conduct, and encouragement of student-led projects. Classroom seating configurations and amicable discussion platforms have to be developed to promote ethical dialogues and collaborative learning among peers. Schools' ought to reduce inactive pedagogical

practices, like rote memorization and disconnected reading tasks, as these techniques do not foster profound moral awareness.

4. **Educators as role model:** Educators can embody moral ideals in their conduct and relationships, thereby emphasizing the importance of honesty, integrity, and generosity in their interactions. Personal narratives and practical implementations of Islamic teachings have to be disseminated to motivate pupils. Educators can continue their mentorship outside the classroom by encouraging ethical conduct, such as honesty in everyday encounters, fostering a sense of community, and promoting courteous behavior in public environments.

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