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CURRICULUM ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN AND SUNNAH

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Abstract

This study examines the alignment of Islamic school curricula with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, focusing on Imam Ghazali's contributions. The curriculum of three Islamic schools in Lahore were examined through curriculum analysis. Results highlight academic excellence, the integration of Islamic values across subjects, and holistic development. They also demonstrate good alignment with Islamic educational ideals. However, in accordance with Ghazali's thought, there has to be more focus placed on practical application, character development, and integrating moral and spiritual lessons into everyday student life. This study provides recommendations to enhance Islamic education in Pakistan, highlighting the importance of integrating both academic and spiritual growth. Further research is encouraged to include diverse Islamic scholarly perspectives and a broader geographical scope.

Keywords: Curriculum analysis, Islamization of Education, Quran and Sunnah

Introduction

Before the contemporary era, learning Arabic and the Quran would start at an early age (Mohamed et al., 2010). The educational system in Islam was largely informal for the first few decades, but starting in the 11th and 12th centuries, the ruling elites started to create schools of higher religious learning known as madrasa in an effort to win the ulema's support and collaboration. Islamic schools quickly proliferated throughout the Islamic world, assisting in the dissemination of Islamic learning outside of metropolitan areas and uniting various Islamic communities in a common cultural endeavour (Yafiz et al., 2022). It was later incorporated into Islamic schools. Prior to that, Islamic education was linked to the idea of an Islamic school in Pakistan, making current education a relatively new idea.

Islamic education primarily uses the teachings of the Holy Quran to impart knowledge and to create experiences that are grounded in the core principles of Islam as they are expressed in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. The main aims of Islamic education are to spread information founded on the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah as well as to foster experiences rooted in Islamic values (Shihade, 2017). Whereas contemporary education can be described as the current curriculum the schools are following. In order to highlight and evaluate the desired learning goals, a curriculum is made up of teaching methodologies, learning opportunities, and student performance reviews. Islamic schools are becoming more and more popular today. Along with the present curriculum offered by modern Islamic schools, parents want their children to receive an Islamic education. Kittelmann Flensner (2015) Religion is essential to human existence though we have madrassas that provide religious education, but we opted

Islamic schools because they are well-regarded, rather than Madrassas (Berglund & Gent, 2018).

The explanation is that Madrassas exclusively offer religious instruction. The fundamental purpose of an Islamic school is to impart both religious and modern information.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the extent to which the current Islamic school system aligns with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.
2. To examine the role of Quran and Sunnah in shaping the curriculum and pedagogy of contemporary Islamic schools.
3. To compare the curriculum of Islamic schools with that of identified criteria set by Muslim scholars.

Research Significance

The research holds significant value in the Pakistani context as

- It offers valuable insights into the alignment of the current Islamic school system with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.
- Identifying potential gaps and areas for improvement in Islamic education, the study can contribute to enhancing the overall system in Pakistan.
- The research will shed light on how the Quran and Sunnah influence the curriculum and teaching methods in contemporary Islamic schools, leading to the development of a more effective and comprehensive approach to Islamic education.
- This research can contribute to the betterment of Islamic education in Pakistan and foster a more holistic understanding and practice of Islamic teachings.

- The practical recommendations based on the analysis of Imam Ghazali's perspective can help in improving the Islamic school system in Pakistan and promoting a better understanding of Islam among students.

Implication

The research findings and Imam Ghazali's perspective on Islamic education have theoretical implications that underscore the significance of integrating Islamic teachings and values into the educational system. Practically, these findings guide Islamic schools in designing comprehensive and impactful educational practices that foster students' holistic development and align with Islamic principles. The implications extend to educational policymakers and administrators, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and supporting Islamic education within the broader educational landscape. By incorporating these theoretical and practical implications, Islamic schools can provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares them academically, morally, and spiritually for their future roles in society (Al Mustafa et al., 2023; Bhutto et al., 2020).

Literature Review

In past research, a significant dilemma known as educational dualism has been highlighted as a central issue facing the Muslim world. This dualism involves the coexistence of two distinct educational systems: the national modern secular system and the traditional Islamic religious system. Both types of schooling have come under scrutiny due to various issues. One of the main concerns with the Islamic religious system is the inadequate and ineffective teaching of Islamic religious sciences, which fails to demonstrate the relevance of the subject matter in

modern life. On the other hand, the secular education system's fundamental principles may not align with the Islamic worldview. As a result, Muslims have expressed disappointment with both systems as they struggle to find an education that harmoniously integrates religious teachings with modern knowledge.

However, Muslims were also dissatisfied with it because to the curriculum's constrained content. Additionally, its instructional technique discourages critical and original thought. Both educational systems have mostly failed to develop a fully-fledged Islamic personality. Religious education has resulted in the formation of religious specialists who often find it challenging to engage effectively in society. They may lack the necessary critical and creative sensitivity to address the current issues faced by the Muslim community (Ummah). On the other hand, the national education system seems to prioritize the development of professionals without placing sufficient emphasis on instilling religious principles in them. This creates a dichotomy where individuals might excel in their respective fields but may struggle to integrate moral and ethical values derived from religious teachings. Because of this, the Muslim Ummah is put in a difficult situation and requires an immediate fix, as stated by (Yaacob & Embong, 2008) in their research on Islamic curriculum and implications of Islamization.

Concept of 'Islamization of Education'

Establishing the concept of an Islamic scholar is not what it means. Islamization is not an endeavour to protect Muslim interests. It is not a contest to become king or to elect leaders from among Muslims. Islamization is the phase or situation in which man will achieve contentment and tranquilly by submission to the Creator's will. Education that is more Islamic will help to encourage people to obey their creator. The most important criterion for Islamization is learning

the Quran because it contains descriptions of all the Creator's wills required to advance man's existence (Saleem et al., 2014).

Since the advent of Islam and the rise of Islam on the Indian subcontinent, Muslim scholars have played a crucial role in the development of Islamic education in curricula. At that time, there were very few academics who could read and write. These academics have contributed significantly to the body of knowledge by fusing the ideas of Islam and education to create curricula for schools that began with children's early education (Saleem et al., 2014; Sutomo, 2014).

Philosophy About Islamic Education

Imam Ghazali's educational philosophy, as detailed in "Ihya-ul-Ulum al-Din," emphasizes that the true purpose of knowledge is divine guidance, not merely wealth or information acquisition. True understanding requires removing the heart's veil to perceive the profound connection between man and his Creator. The Quran is the primary source of valuable knowledge and should be the foundation of Islamic education, supported by the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to illustrate practical wisdom. Muslims are obliged to seek truth through knowledge to establish a relationship with Allah (Samaeng, 2008).

Muslim Scholars

Ibne Khaldun: The well-known social philosopher Ibn Khaldun positioned that education is fundamentally a social activity that mirrors the hierarchical social structures. He saw parenting and education as complementary fields that combined behavioural and academic approaches.

According to Shihade (2017), Ibn Khaldun categorized the sciences into two categories: those that are naturally occurring (ascribed primal sciences) and those that are gained via teaching (acquired-secondary sciences). He also made a distinction between the mental sciences and philosophical and wisdom sciences. His triple approach to education and raising children included psychological understanding as the foundation for theories, historical perspectives on educational practices in many cultures, and useful advice for caregivers and educators. He underlined the value of specialization and the way that education may alter a person's thoughts and conduct.

Shareef (2018) emphasized the idea of "a sense of solidarity," or "Asabiyah," as put forward by Ibn Khaldun, which emphasizes the social, political, economic, and environmental elements that all play a part in the development of human civilization. Ibn Khaldun argued that education should provide students with a broad knowledge base for a well-rounded existence rather than focusing on specialized areas of study, citing the relationship between the sciences and crafts. According to his research, children in Andalusia and Tunisia learnt the Qur'an via Arabic poetry, grammar, and writing, with Andalusian teaching methods having an influence on Tunisian education. He conducted a comparative examination of different instructional approaches to determine the best approaches for achieving proficiency in Arabic speaking. (Dajani, 2015).

Shah Wali Ullah: Khan (1997) Ahmad ibn Abd al-Rahim, popularly known as Shah Wali-Allah of Delhi, is hailed as one of South Asia's most eminent Islamic scholars. He was renowned for his proficiency in Arabic and Persian literature and was considered a "synthetic thinker," akin to the likes of Al-Ghazali and ibn-Khaldun. Emphasizing the phrase "Back to the

Qur'an," he advocated for the abandonment of the old system and advocated for a revival of jihad and ijtihad (independent legal reasoning). In his masterpiece, "Hajjat-Allah al-Balighah" (The Conclusive Argument from God), Wali-Allah constructed an "integrated system" of Sharia, presenting a comprehensive theoretical framework for interpretation and implementation. His profound influence on subsequent generations of Muslim intellectuals in the Indian subcontinent is well-recognized, with figures like Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Mawlana Abul Aala Mawdudi among those who have been inspired by his ideas (Khan, 1997).

According to Shah Wali Ulla, the basis of all faiths (Din or Faith) is the same. He said that each Prophet brought with him a unique Sharia's to meet the needs of his people and period. Living in a society and working for its advancement were aspects of faith, he claimed, and Islam supported moderation. His contemporaries praised Shah Wali Ulla's methodology. Shah Wali Ullah recognised the needs and trends in social philosophy that would arise over the following centuries, as evidenced by the founding of the "Hujjah". He frequently referred to Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam, Imam Ghazali, and Khatabi. He emphasised the value of ijtihad. The Sociological Thought of Shah Wali Ullah 133 The heart of traditional Islamic thinking was effectively carried forth by Shah Wali Ullah (Zulqarnain et al., 2022).

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: The goal of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was not only to provide Muslims with the education they so urgently needed, but also to achieve social reforms. He realizes that the fundamental cause of the Muslim community's demise was social predators. Sir Syed thinks that education is everything in terms of advancement and that Muslims, should gain a treasure of knowledge in all subjects (Hussain, 2022).

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Aligarh Movement was an endeavour to revitalize the Muslim community via modern education and the positive propagation of Islam. He attempted to discover the causes behind the educational, social, and political downfall of Indian Muslims. Sir Syed made the decision to use modern education, which had been developed with the foundation of British rule in India, to better the lot of Muslims. Allama Shaquib emphasized four major factors that contributed to Muslims' decline, including moral deterioration, illiteracy, a lack of education, and the demise of Muslim Ullma. The desire at the time was for more practical contemporary education to counter the claims of British rule. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan visited England and studied the English way of life, culture, and civilization from head to toe. The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) School began offering classes in Arabic, English, Mathematics, History, Persian, and Geography. The first guy to be appointed as the headmaster of MAO School was Henry Siddons. Ahmed Khan was a watershed moment in Muslim history, as evidenced by his visit to a school (Hussain, 2022).

In 1886, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan took a giant step forward by founding the All Mohammadan Educational Congress. The term was afterwards changed to conference. At MAO School, AIMEC held its first meeting on December 27, 1886. 161 representatives from Agra, Avadh, Punjab, and Central India attended the first meeting. to utilise this forum to educate Muslims about education. The following targets and goals were set by AIMEC:

1. Identifying the best way to set up higher education for Muslims.
2. It would support and work to strengthen English-language religious education.
3. To spread awareness of Islamiat and help the Ullma fulfil their religious obligations.

As AIMEC's secretary for 10 years, Syed Ali Sir Syed Ahmed Khan carried out the organization's purpose without interruption. This forum allowed Muslims to showcase their qualities with passion and enthusiasm (Hussain, 2022).

Imam Ghazali as Guiding Thought for Study

Imam Ghazali made significant contributions to the establishment of the Islamic education system, emphasizing a comprehensive approach that included education for women, physical and health education, and psychological perspectives on human nature and virtue. He proposed that education should start at an early age when children are most impressionable, instilling moral values and good habits by providing opportunities to practice these principles. This method allows children to observe and emulate the values demonstrated by their teachers and parents, thereby developing a strong moral character (Armayanto et al., 2022).

Ghazali's educational philosophy also underscored the importance of hands-on practice and social interaction, where children learn to accept, adapt, be tolerant, share, care, help, and form social relationships through group activities. Teachers play a crucial role in this process by serving as role models, demonstrating punctuality, fairness, and consistency in their behaviour. Any form of bias or negative behaviour from teachers can damage students' self-esteem and hinder their moral development. Therefore, teachers must embody the principles they teach to foster a positive learning environment.

Ghazali's ideas on education are remarkably similar to those of modern educational theorists like John Dewey and Herbert, who emphasize the integration of moral and spiritual teachings alongside cognitive development. His foresight in including practical subjects such as home sciences and vocational skills in the curriculum aligns with contemporary educational

practices, catering to diverse student needs and preparing them for real-life responsibilities. This holistic approach is increasingly recognized by educators today as essential for addressing societal issues related to indiscipline and immoral behaviour, thus highlighting the enduring relevance of Ghazali's educational theories (Olfah, 2023).

Research Methodology

The most appropriate methodology for this research was curriculum analysis which is a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research can be well explained in terms of its defining features. This research involves document analysis and structured interviews

Document Analysis: Document analysis of these schools was done to compare these articulated educational aims and objective with the observed practices. , The books prescribed in the curricula of the selected schools for primary level will be reviewed to understand the linkage between the curriculum and aims and objectives of the respondents.

Interview: Structured interviews were conducted in this study; 3 Islamic schools were selected as the target population for investigation using standardized open-ended questionnaires in the form of structured interviews. Each institution will go through the same sequence of interviews. The aims and objectives will be analysed in the light of Islamic education as articulated by renowned Islamic scholars like Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khuldoon.

Sampling: The sampling techniques for this research study was non-probability purposive sampling. As advocated by Patton. “The logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selected information-rich cases for in depth studying”.

The reason for selecting the schools were as follows:

- Schools that have been active for past five years
- The primary mission of the school is to provide Islamic education according to Quran and Sunnah.
- Private schools will be selected because Government schools do not have liberty to modify the government curriculum, whereas private schools have the right to change or modify the curriculum to align themselves to their vision.

Study Findings

To comprehensively assess the curriculum of various Islamic schools, we conducted a detailed document analysis that focused on three prominent institutions located in Lahore. Our evaluation was anchored in the perspectives of both Islamic and secular education in Pakistan. By juxtaposing the curriculum of these institutions with the recognized criteria established by Muslim scholars, we aimed to ascertain the extent of alignment and identify potential areas of enrichment.

Beginning with Rosans Islamic School, our analysis revealed distinct facets from the perspectives of Islamic and secular education. In terms of Islamic education, the curriculum was notable for its emphasis on the integration of Islamic teachings and values throughout the educational journey. Incorporating Hifz (memorization of the Quran) as an optional subject exemplifies the school's commitment to nurturing an intimate connection with the Quran, while simultaneously preparing students for O' levels examinations. This alignment with Islamic principles resonates with the criteria set by Muslim scholars, emphasizing the centrality of Islamic teachings in education.

From the secular education standpoint, the curriculum displayed a fervent dedication to academic excellence, positioning students for the rigorous 'O' levels exams. The meticulous selection of textbooks and adherence to the GCSE exam pattern underpin this commitment. While aligning with the educational standards established by Muslim scholars that underscore academic rigor, it is imperative to ensure that this pursuit does not overshadow holistic development.

The use of Continuous Assessment Tests (C.A.Ts) to monitor student progress and adherence to retesting procedures for certain subjects underscores the importance of academic standards. This aligns with the criteria advocated by Muslim scholars for rigorous evaluation. However, to uphold a balanced education, a comprehensive assessment approach encompassing character development, critical thinking skills, and practical application of knowledge should be integrated. Imam Ghazali's emphasis on holistic development, encompassing moral and spiritual growth, underscores the need for evaluating students beyond just academic achievements.

To bridge the connection between the curriculum and Muslim scholars' criteria, the infusion of Imam Ghazali's perspectives becomes paramount. Ensuring equal attention to character development, ethics, and spiritual aspects within the curriculum is imperative. The integration of Islamic values into all dimensions of students' lives must transcend the confines of the classroom. A school culture steeped in Islamic principles, the practical application of teachings, and the incorporation of ethical dilemmas and problem-solving activities contribute to this holistic approach. By incorporating these principles, Islamic schools can further elevate their curriculum to reflect the comprehensive growth and development advocated by Muslim scholars, as embodied in Imam Ghazali's teachings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the curriculum School 1 demonstrates a commitment to integrating Islamic teachings and values while prioritizing academic excellence. However, to further enhance the curriculum, it is important to ensure a balanced approach that encompasses the holistic development of students. Incorporating Imam Ghazali's perspectives by emphasizing spiritual and moral development, promoting practical application of Islamic teachings, and integrating Islamic values in all aspects of students' lives beyond the classroom will contribute to a more comprehensive and impactful educational experience (Shahzadi et al., 2021).

The curriculum analysis of School 2 reflects a commendable effort to integrate contemporary knowledge with Islamic teachings. The school's focus on character building, high moral values, and personal development aligns with Islamic education principles. Additionally, School 2 emphasis on academic excellence and holistic development demonstrates a commitment to secular education.

From an Islamic education perspective, School 2's efforts to blend contemporary knowledge with Islamic teachings and promote an Islamic identity are noteworthy. However, it is important to ensure that Islamic teachings are not limited to grade-fetching subjects but are integrated into students' daily lives (Novita et al., 2021). This can be achieved by fostering an environment that encourages practical application of Islamic values, incorporating spiritual growth, and nurturing a deep understanding of Islam. From a secular education perspective, its focus on academic excellence and holistic development through various subjects and activities is commendable. The inclusion of arts, physical education, and library access reflects an effort to provide a well-rounded education.

The curriculum analysis of School 3 reflects a commendable effort to provide modern education while incorporating Islamic values and teachings. The school's emphasis on Quran and Sunnah, the development of upright character, and active parental involvement align with the principles of Islamic education.

From an Islamic education perspective, School 3's curriculum strives to create an environment that strengthens faith and values. The inclusion of Islamic teachings and the emphasis on character development align with the objectives of Islamic education. However, it is important to ensure that the integration of Islamic teachings is not limited to theoretical knowledge but extends to practical application in students' lives.

Overall, School 3's curriculum demonstrates efforts to integrate modern education with Islamic values. By incorporating Imam Ghazali's perspectives, the school can further enhance the curriculum by emphasizing practical application, character development, and reflection, thus creating a comprehensive educational experience for students (Madar & Othman, 2022).

Delimitation

The study on Islamic education, focusing on Imam Ghazali, education is insightful, but its applicability is restricted by its small, Pakistani sample from Lahore. Subsequent studies should expand the scope and encompass a variety of locations. For a more complete picture, it should also consider the viewpoints of other Islamic scholars and use a variety of data gathering techniques to reduce the bias caused by self-reporting. Deeper insights might also be obtained by doing longitudinal research and looking at various cultural situations. Further research and development of efficient, value-aligned educational procedures might be accomplished by

examining the responsibilities played by parents and the community as well as contrasting Islamic and secular educational systems.

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