# The Pivotal Role of Teachers in Fostering Morality: An Examination of the Challenges in the Revival of Islamic Moral Values

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Re-focusing on moral growth is a vital requirement that cannot be neglected at a time when moral decadence has affected everyone, including children, adolescents, and adults. The present study aims to assess the role of teachers in fostering morality and their challenges in the revival of Islamic moral values. A qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of teacher trainers. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews to assess the role of teachers in imparting moral values and their problems in reviving Islamic moral values. 12 teachers' trainers were approached via purposive sampling technique. After data collection data was analyzed by qualitative content analysis. The major findings of the study shed a welcoming light on the essential role of teachers in cultivating moral values in students. It also listed the major challenges that hinder the revivalism of moral values in education such as modernization, lack of professional training, less focus on the affective domain, lack of discipline, and excessive use of the internet.

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## 1.    Introduction

At present the situation of society is not any different from a failing building bearing the weight of increasing uncertainty day by day just to stand a little longer looking vacantly for its reconstruction in the form of moral stability. Emphasizing the fact that change starts from within the reformation of society starts with educational institutes whose core component is Teachers, as teachers play a very significant role in the moral and educational development of students. The goal to polish the personalities of youth can be obtained via advancing moral literacy and aligning actions with these moral values.

Morality has been defined through various perspectives, philosophers and psychologists trying to explain it in the best way possible but the most terms in which it can be interpreted is that morality means the ability of a person to perceive the highest good in a society. These views are grounded on a set of philosophies, notions, and standards setting the standards for "right" and "wrong". These parameters of right and wrong decide the notion of which factors contribute to happiness. Happiness has a definite social preference, whereas "morality" usually denotes attitudes and predispositions that nurture respect, accountability, honesty, and decency. Lickona (1996) argues that two core components constitute the whole term "morality". Respect is further divided into two categories one is respect for one own self the other is for respecting other's opinions, sentiments, and cultures. Accountability contains tolerance and recognition of one's act and

the realization of one's duty toward the welfare of society by participating enthusiastically in social, cultural, and political communities. "Morality is observed as the system of rules that regulate social interactions" (Maria & Sandeep, 2021). Teachers need to establish a strong connection with their students. To ensure the efficacy of students learning, they must receive proper care and attention. It is crucial for teachers to clearly express their values and recognize how these values can affect students' personalities (Gui et al., 2020).

Around the globe in all educational institutions moral values have been taught implicitly and explicitly (Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022). One of the best ways to teach morality implicitly is through the role-modeling of instructors. Instructors are the key players in infusing moral values effectively (Narinasamy & Logeswaran, 2015). As indicated by DeRoche and Williams (2001), teachers' modeling is one of the strongest of all factors that influence students' character. But if there is a contradiction between teachers' words and actions then students will most likely disobey and ignore their teachers. Most instructors consider teaching as a source of income or adopt teaching by chance, not by choice. Skoe (2010) also sheds welcoming light on the role of teachers in imparting moral values and concludes that teachers are the moral models for students and contribute to imparting moral values effectively. Also, the role of institutions cannot be ignored. Educational institutions perform a pivotal role in bringing positive social change. The rapid change in social structure increases moral deficiency in the daily social activities of the young generation (Nuriman & Fauzan, 2017). Many researches have been conducted to observe the effect of moral deficiency among students on nation-building (Bozdoğan, 2001; Harding, 2008; Waghid, 2004). It is concluded that moral deficiency is directly linked with societal culture and personality traits of individuals (Coleman, 1994; Robertson, 1992). Moreover, it is also associated with the educational system and running curriculum in educational institutions (Bigger, 2013). Most of the studies provide empirical support that most of the behavioral changes are due to learning activities conducted in educational institutions (Giddens, 1979; Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Merton, 1968).

Classroom practices are fundamental to character formation, and students are exposed to moral values daily (E Campbell, 2003; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). To have a deeper understanding of their students' abilities and limitations in comprehending everyday moral concepts, educators should possess a more comprehensive knowledge of moral development theories. Educators must fulfill their duty of imparting moral or character education; they must initially acquire a solid foundation in the theoretical aspects of moral development before applying that foundation in their instructional methods. Research conducted by KENPRO (2010), examined the responsibilities of teachers as moral educators. The study suggested that moral development is nurtured by positive role modeling. The researcher first emphasized the position of the teacher as a role model, someone who sets a positive example for students. Additionally, the teacher serves as a counselor, offering guidance to students to prevent them from engaging in immoral behavior. Another responsibility of instructors is to establish a nurturing atmosphere, which plays a crucial role in fostering the moral growth of children. The teacher's third responsibility entails instructing pupils about the significance of ethical conduct through both direct and indirect methods. Lastly, teachers should assist students in cultivating their self-regulation and self-efficacy. They must offer students a chance to oversee their own academic advancement and personal growth.

According to Klaassen (2012), educators must constantly show their best qualities to set a positive example for their students and encourage them to imitate such behavior. Teachers should possess the moral courage to serve as moral models for their students. Individuals must possess the courage to defend their ideas, foster moral values, and criticize immoral conduct in various individuals such as students, parents, colleagues, and school administrators. Based on the findings, Klaassen concluded that teachers should consistently serve as role models and can influence the perceptions of students. They serve as role models who can assist students in developing their attitudes and vocational training skills. Students learn and adopt the personality traits of their instructors, who possess particular qualities. The learners will develop moral values through instruction from their instructors. Students' moral socialization can be effectively and efficiently achieved by providing them with a positive role model.

The study conducted by Pantić and Wubbels (2012) examined the extent to which instructors' moral values influence their interpersonal relationships with students and how these values are reflected. The teachers involved in the study reported that they serve as moral exemplars for pupils in the classroom. Unlike other occupations that maintain social distance, instructors should have the ability to establish close relationships with their students to facilitate their learning and moral development. The inculcation of Islamic moral values is an indispensable part of tertiary education across Muslim countries specifically in Pakistan.  Islamic moral values are considered the backbone of the social life of individuals. Moral values inculcate a deep understanding of the fundamental principles of Islam and guide them to decide between right and wrong throughout their lives. This notion highlighted that the major drive of education is not only to produce good citizens but also to produce morally strong individuals. This is worth mentioning that moral values are considered a vital component of an individual's life (Cameron & Cassidy, 2022). To live an ideal life an individual must possess various values most importantly how they deal with conflicting values and make decisions independently. This requires the capability to judge one's moral values.

One of the primary aims of a "Muslim's life" is to achieve high moral standards. Moral values show the direction of what an individual is supposed to do or prohibited to do in a given society. However, the major agenda of Islamic moral values is to determine and control human activity in Muslim society for the benefit of the whole society. Although it is mainly dependent on training and disciplining pupils to adopt the best etiquette and personal characteristics. This provides empirical support to the notion that students' moral character is directly associated with the educational system. Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' morality (Nuriman & Fauzan, 2017). The modern era has been so unfortunate in terms of offering quality education to students, it has been everything except productive, relatable, and utilitarian in any way that can teach a student to cope with the ups and downs of life. In recent days' education has become a business where it is treated like any other profession. No one person can be blamed for it because the problem lies within us. We make a society, and we as a whole decide the value of every single aspect of our life. We emphasize the importance of becoming doctor, engineer, civil servant, and every other glorifying profession for our children except the most significant element that we never weigh is the importance of 'learning' to become a person who is in actual terms be considered the master who can evaluate his/her knowledge to face hardships of a challenge named 'life' (Niaz & Zafar, 2023).

The above-discussed notion lends support that there is a strong association between morality and education. Classrooms are considered as a miniature of socially accepted and rejected moral values and separating them from society's moral standards can create hurdles in achieving societal justice. Educational institutions should be transformative in a manner that can promote good morals. To narrow the gap between moral beliefs and practice this study is about to highlight the pivotal role of teachers in fostering morality and an examination of the challenges in revival of Islamic moral values.  Although education is "moral by nature," according to Chang (1994) many educators are still unsure of how to help students develop moral judgment.  Beyer (1997) illuminated that instructors must possess the capacity to reflect the ethical aspects of classroom practice to cultivate a democratic citizenry among their students.  When looking at teaching from a moral perspective, most of the researchers agreed that teachers' personal beliefs and characteristics, as well as how they incorporate those beliefs into their instruction, play a major role in the development of their students' character (Elizabeth Campbell, 2003; Damon, 2007; Sullivan, 2004). The Research Questions are as under;

- How do teachers promote Islamic moral values into classrooms?
- What are the major challenges hindering the revivalism of Islamic moral values?

## 2.    Methodology

The present study adopted qualitative approach with phenomenological research design. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2023) a phenomenological study is the qualitative research design that adopt to comprehend the perceptions of people and their opinions about their societal and physical realities. The population of the study consisted of teacher's

trainers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to assess the role of teachers in imparting moral values and their problems in reviving Islamic moral values. 12 teachers' trainers were approached via purposive sampling technique. As Creswell (2021) highlighted that purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which respondents are selected who best understand the phenomenon to be examined. After data collection data was analyzed by qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2021). The transcribed interviews were studied again and again and themes were developed from the collected data.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Role of Teachers in Imparting Moral Values

Presently, the responsibilities of teachers are becoming increasingly demanding. They serve as second parents to their students, performing the double role of educating and nurturing them inside the school environment. The results of the study provide empirical support that teachers are the core element of the education process, but a 'good teacher' has always been a cherry on top. They lead their students toward the attainment of educational goals. The most important duty of a teacher is to meet the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, moral physical needs of students.

Effective teaching demands a harmonious integration of theoretical foundations and a strong personal value system. Moreover, moral education can be classified into two categories: training of ethical norms and values and development of ethical awareness and decision-making. Being spiritual mentors, teachers are believed to put effort into assist students to develop a strong moral character. As the respondent "A" responded that

"After parents, teachers are the ones who spend more time with the child. Teachers are considered as the change agent that can bring change in child behavior and assist them to develop good moral character. They can also guide them on how to live a purposeful life and contribute towards the betterment of society.

### 3.2. Problems

Although education is "moral by nature," many educators are still unsure how to foster moral values in students. The present conditions of uncertainty and social chaos have some reasons behind them.

### 3.2.1 Modernity

One of the reasons is "**Modernity**". It is a worldwide condition of a constant socio-cultural, economic, and political transformation of human experience, with tradition or religion having no significant role to play in aspects of life. It is the gradual decline of the role of religion in modernity through the implementation of the principles of secularism which has, according to Islamic revivalists, plunged the world into "crisis.

As a respondent reported that "In my opinion modernity drastically decline in moral development as now individuals are more concerned about the pleasure of they fail to respect others' sentiments".

### 3.2.2 Less focus on Affective Domain

In most of the teacher training programs, only a single session under the Educational Psychology course is conducted that focuses on theories about moral development. However, this single session is insufficient in terms of comprehensively addressing the significance of moral development in human growth. It is uncertain whether or if there will be an increased focus on moral development theory in the study of human development for future professionals.

Respondent D reported that "now the teacher education curriculum is more focused on teaching methods in core disciplines, there is minimal room for the integration of moral education".

### 3.2.3 Lack of Discipline

One of the most significant challenges facing education in our nation today is the disciplinary issue among students.  The issue becomes critical when children lose their moral compass, making it difficult for them to distinguish between right and wrong in their behavior, both within and outside of school.  One of the major causes behind the issue is the lack of morality in students.

Respondent B gave the assertion about the challenges and stated that "lack of discipline is one of the factor that draw the attention of educational administration and for me it is the major cause of immorality".

### 3.2.4 Excessive Use of Internet

Internet provides wide range of social platforms to students. theses platforms have a negative impact on students' morality. Students' decision-making and behavior in real-life situations are largely affected by the aggressive content seen on social media.

As respondent D gave her opinion that "The major factors that are adding fuel to the fire are social media and bad peer company. These days' children consume online material from an early age. An age in which they're not mature enough to decide what's right and what's wrong for them. They just adopt the trends and follow them passionately as these ridiculous social media trends are so normalized among the youth that they follow them blindly".

### 3.2.5 Lack of Trainings

Many teacher preparation programs have yet to integrate the proper training sessions for teachers. Most of the teachers does not receive adequate sessions on effective integration of moral values into daily classrooms.

Respondent "F" expressed his view on the challenges and told that "Yes! There are some training programs that offer good interventions to promote or inculcate morality among students but they're like drop in the ocean so unfortunately, they don't have that impact because of the limited exposure. Overall, it does not have the impact that these kinds of opportunities should have".

## 4.    Conclusion

The first research question of the study was to assess the role of teachers in promoting Islamic moral values into classrooms. The major findings of the study provide empirical support that the teachers are the main pillars to foster moral values into learning environment. They are considered the change agent that affect the students' moral development. A teacher has a huge responsibility to train students to behave ethically and help them to become a role model in the Community. As Kaur (2015) holds a strong perspective that an instructor should be able to acknowledge the significance of the factors and contexts that are influencing the behavior, selections, lifestyles and welfare of children and young people and their families.

The second research question of the current study was to assess the major challenges hindering the revivalism of Islamic moral values. The final results put welcoming light on the present conditions of uncertainty and social chaos have some challenges behind them. One of the major challenge in imparting moral values is modernity. As highlighted by Chaeroh (2024) that the major decline in students' moral behavior and manners is because of modernization. The findings also illuminated that the major factor that hinders the progress of education sector is lack of discipline. The issue becomes critical when children lose their moral compass, making it difficult for them to distinguish between "right and wrong" in their behavior, both within and outside of school. As Kok (2018) reported that even though moral education is taught in every educational institution and teachers have been imparting moral values to their students, the issue of school discipline keeps drawing

media attention. The other major challenge faced by educators in reviving Islamic moral values in classrooms is lack of professional trainings.

The study provides empirical support that the major focus in pre-service and in-service training programs is to equip the teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and have no interest in the integration of moral education. It should be mandatory for teacher preparation programs to integrate the moral aspects of teaching into their academic curricula (Cummings, Harlow, & Maddux, 2007). The other contributory factor of moral deficiency is excessive use of internet. Currently the major factors that weakens the moral fiber of the younger generation are technological advancements, declining quality of faith, socio-environmental factors, dishonesty, lack of responsibility, not thinking far ahead, and lack of self-control (Jannah, 2020).

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