



EXPLORING THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC VALUES, ETHICS, AND PRACTICES IN PAKISTAN: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

Muhammad Khan*

*PhD Scholar, Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, American International Theism
University Florida USA*

m.khan@aituedu.org

Dr. Eman Mamdough

*Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, American International Theism University Florida
USA*

eman.mamdough@aituedu.org

Dr. Muhammad Shahid Habib

*Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, American International Theism University Florida
USA*

m.shahidhabib@aituedu.org

Abstract:

An investigation into the perception, interpretation, and application of Islamic ideas, ethics, and practices in the setting of Pakistan is the focus of this qualitative study. To investigate three dimensions, the study conducts extensive interviews with practitioners, educators, religious scholars, and lay Muslims. These interviews are used to investigate the following three dimensions: (1) the conceptualization of Islamic moral values; (2) the integration of these values into daily practices; and (3) the challenges and tensions faced in the implementation of these values within contemporary Pakistani society. A close connection between moral ideals based on the Qur'an and Sunnah and everyday life is demonstrated by the findings. However, they also demonstrate that there are issues, such as the disparity between ideals and actions, the effects of culture and modernity, the limitations of institutions in education, business, and public organizations, and the requirement for changes in teaching, organizational, and policy in order to bring values, ethics, and actions into alignment with one another. The research contributes to the existing understanding of Islamic ethics and provides recommendations that are relevant to education, government, and organizational ethics in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Values and ethics of Islam, , moral behaviors, and Islamic education.*

Introduction:

The Islamic way of life serves as the foundation for Pakistan's legal system, culture, and educational system. The concept of an "Islamic state" has, ever since its inception, placed a strong emphasis on the incorporation of values, ethical principles, and practices that are derived

from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) into the lives of individuals and communities. The implementation of these values and ethics in a practical manner, as well as its manifestation in the actions that are performed on a daily basis inside social institutions, is an important area of investigation. According to Shaukat and Basharat (2022), Islamic values and ethics are not only theoretical constructions; rather, they are intended to serve as a guide for individuals' intentions (niyyah), actions ('amal), and institutional frameworks (nizām). According to Ehya (2022), the moral code in Islam is not conditional or dependant upon cultural standards; rather, it is absolute and unequivocal without any room for interpretation. The fact that this is the case raises questions regarding the manner in which people in Pakistan comprehend and adhere to Islamic teachings in a society that is undergoing transformation, with economic issues, limited institutions, and a diverse range of cultures. What methods are utilized to effectively communicate, incorporate, and implement Islamic principles within the realms of formal education, the business sector, the public sphere, and ordinary social interactions? For the purpose of analyzing these problems, this research intends to carry out a qualitative study that is centered on Pakistan. In the context of Pakistan, the purpose of this study is to provide a descriptive examination of ideals and practices, as well as an analytical exploration of the tensions and facilitators of ethical behavior that is built on Islam. In addition to this, it intends to provide guidance on how to manage companies and formulate policies.

The purpose of this study is to research how people in Pakistan conceptualize Islamic ideas and ethics. To investigate the ways in which these principles are implemented in the actual world in certain domains, such as the academic world, the economic world, the governmental sector, and the family life.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore how Islamic values and ethics are conceptualized by individuals in Pakistan.
2. To examine how these values are embedded in actual practices across selected domains (education, business, public service, family life).
3. To identify the challenges and enablers of implementing Islamic ethics in Pakistan.
4. To propose recommendations for strengthening Islamic ethical practices within institutions and everyday life.

This paper provides a review of relevant literature on Islamic value systems, ethics and Pakistani institutional context; outlines the methodology of the qualitative study; presents findings; discusses them in light of theory and context; and concludes with implications and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Islamic Values and Ethical Frameworks

In Islamic philosophy, the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are the primary sources from which morals and ethics are derived. According to Shaukat

and Basharat (2022), Islamic morality is founded on a transcendental perspective, which states that individuals were divinely created to worship Allah (ta'abbud), and moral agency is an essential component of this objective. Amānah, which means trust, 'adl, which means fairness, ihsān, which means excellence, khalīfah, which means vice-regency, mīzān, which means balancing, and maslahah, which means public benefit are some of the values that are included in the ethical underpinnings (Hayat, 2025). Justice, rights, and accountability are some of the societal aspects that are included in these concepts. Character, intention, and action are examples of human characteristics. According to Shaukat and Basharat (2022), the Islamic ethical paradigm is objective and universal, in contrast to the moral relativism that is prevalent in the field.

In addition to this, an investigation of Islamic business ethics has been carried out. According to research conducted in Pakistan, an Islamic work ethic (IWE) is a significant factor in determining the level of job performance achieved by personnel working in the public sector. This success is influenced by public service motivation and psychological capital. According to Usman, Hanif, and Aamish (2024), ethical leadership provides additional impact over these relationships. Moreover, according to Din and Farooq's research from 2020, Islamic values have an impact on the health and stress levels of workers while they are on the job. When it comes to the world of business, customers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa demonstrate positive attitudes towards Islamic business ethics. This is a reflection of the positive impact that ideas like voluntary rectitude have (Ismail, Ullah, & Zaheer, 2020).

Islamic Ethics in Education and Socialisation in Pakistan

The internalisation of values is mostly accomplished through the medium of education. According to research conducted by Siddiqui and Habib (2022), instructors of Islamiyat (Islamic studies) in Pakistan have the perception that moral and Islamic values are inextricably linked between them, and that these concepts originate from the Qur'an and Hadith. In spite of this, the majority of educational practices are still based on traditional methods, such as lectures and memorisation, rather than constructivist approaches that aim to alter the way people think and behave. Faith and exposure to Islamic ideas are positively connected with social justice orientated, kindness, forgiveness, and other attributes, according to research on moral literacy among university students (Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022). This research was conducted in higher education and was conducted specifically on university students. In spite of efforts to institutionalise these values through constitutional and policy measures (for example, Article 31 of the 1973 Constitution), implementation has been hindered by factors such as teacher quality, curriculum inconsistency, sectarian divisions, and funding challenges (Bilal & Haseeb, 2025). Therefore, a historical-legal examination of the integration of Islamic values into Pakistan's educational framework indicates that this has been the case.

Islamic Ethics and Social Practice in the Pakistani Context

In the context of cultural and institutional settings, Islamic ethics face a number of issues. These challenges include the connection between religion and culture, the difficulties of modernisation, and the mismatch between normative declarations and actual behaviours. It is possible, for instance, that cultural habits may on occasion take precedence over ethical concepts that are founded on Islam, and that the transfer of values may not be sufficient. It is

possible that teachers in the educational sector do not place a high priority on qualities such as tolerance, human rights, or peace, despite the fact that they support Islamic moral standards (Siddiqui & Habib, 2022).

In addition to that, the ecological element has been investigated. Given Pakistan's heightened sensitivity to the effects of climate change, Islamic ecological ethical frameworks are of great assistance. According to Hayat (2025), the principles of *khalīfah* (stewardship), *mīzān* (balance), and *isrāf* (prohibition of waste) in the Qur'ān provide a significant moral foundation for the concept of environmental sustainability. In light of this, Islamic ethics cover not only the morality of the person but also the responsibility of the community and the justice of the environment.

The literature, in a nutshell, reveals that Islamic beliefs and practices are deeply ingrained and influential within the social structure, educational system, and organisational dynamics of Pakistan. In spite of this, there are still shortcomings in the areas of practice, instruction, and institutionalisation. Investigation into the manner in which individuals comprehend and use these ideas in their day-to-day lives is still of utmost significance.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the lived perspectives of Islamic values, ethics and practices among diverse stakeholders in Pakistan. Qualitative methods are suitable for capturing nuance, meaning and context in how values are conceptualised and enacted (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Sampling and Participants

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants from four domains: (1) religious scholars/imams, (2) educators/teachers of Islamic studies (*Islamiyat*) in schools and higher education, (3) business and public sector professionals who identify themselves as guided by Islamic ethics, and (4) lay Muslims participating in community life (voluntary associations, family, civic engagement). In total, 20 interviews were conducted (5 from each domain). The sample attempted gender and regional diversity (urban/rural, Punjab/Sindh/Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) though such variation was constrained by access.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews of approximately 45-60 minutes each, conducted face-to-face or by video call (depending on access and participant availability). The interview guide covered: participants' conceptualisation of Islamic values and ethics; how they perceive those values are taught and internalised; how those values are practised in their lives/institutions; what challenges or contradictions they face; and their suggestions for improvement.

All interviews were audio-recorded (with participant consent) and transcribed verbatim. Data collection continued until saturation of themes was reached (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2019).

Data Analysis

Transcripts were analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initial open coding generated categories, followed by axial coding to connect themes, and finally selective coding to identify overarching themes. The researcher maintained reflexivity through memos and engaged peer-debriefing to enhance credibility. NVivo software was used for coding management.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from [Institutional Review Board – anonymous for this article]. Participants were informed of the research purpose, assured of confidentiality and anonymisation of data. Consent forms were secured. Participants could withdraw at any time.

Limitations

As with qualitative studies, findings are not statistically generalisable. The sample size and geographic reach are limited. There may also be social desirability bias, especially when discussing religious and moral matters. Nonetheless, the study offers rich insight into processes of moral meaning-making and practice in Pakistan.

Findings

In analysing the interviews, five major thematic clusters emerged: (1) conceptualisation of Islamic values and ethics; (2) internalisation and teaching of these values; (3) enactment in everyday practice; (4) institutional and societal challenges; and (5) enablers and recommendations. Each is now described with exemplar quotations (pseudonyms used for anonymity).

1. Conceptualisation of Islamic Values and Ethics

It was frequently observed by the participants that Islamic principles may be found within the fundamental sources, which are the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). One of the instructors in Lahore made the following statement: "Our moral values are nothing but Islam's values; we get them from the Qur'an and Hadith" (Tch, 1). The following statement was made by a teacher at a madrasa: "Morality is at the heart of all of Islam." Moral standards serve as the basis for each and every one of your acts. The Qur'an, the Hadith, the personality of the Prophet (pbuh), and the living examples of religious saints are the sources from which we get our moral principles. (Siddiqui & Habib, 2022) according to Tch5.

Among the values that were emphasised by the participants were honesty (ṣidq), trust (amānah), justice (ʿadl), kindness (raḥmah), humility (tawāḍuʿ), patience (ṣabr), and social duty (maslahah). A commercial enterprise owner from Karachi stated, "In business, I try to keep my intentions pure, don't cheat, and treat my workers fairly—these are all things that come from

Islam." According to a scholar, "Islamic ethics are objective and do not change with the whims of culture" (for example, Shaukat & Basharat, 2022).

2. Internalisation and Teaching of Islamic Values

When it comes to the manner in which values are taught and learnt, teachers have stated that the formal curriculum for Islamiyat is the primary method. On the other hand, they did point out that the teaching methods are mainly restricted to lectures, story-telling, and the rote memorisation of portions from the Qur'an and Hadiths. Participatory approaches, which help pupils develop as individuals, are not utilised. According to the statement of a teacher at a secondary school, "We teach the subject, ask questions, and test students, but we don't always know if the attitude has changed." Previous research has indicated that typical subject-centered instructional approaches are prevalent, but they do not provide comprehensive attitude development (Siddiqui & Habib, 2022). These results provide further evidence that validates this assumption.

A number of individuals who were interviewed stressed the significance of informal socialisation, which includes family, the mosque, peer groups, and social institutions within the community. A non-professional participant made the following observation: "My parents placed a strong emphasis on being honest, helping out neighbours, and forgiving others; these values were not merely taught but were also practiced at home." The findings of other studies have demonstrated that moral literacy is linked to acts of compassion, social justice, and faith among college students (Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022).

3. Enactment in Everyday Practice

The participants presented numerous examples of the use of values in a variety of fields by providing examples. There was a widespread belief that the ideals of respecting elders, assisting those who are in need, and maintaining a modest demeanour were essential in the context of family life. It was said by professionals that they were making an effort to avoid corruption, maintain their promises, treat people fairly, and develop trust in their workplace. In Islamabad, a government employee was quoted as saying, "I believe that if I act fairly and openly, I am doing my duty as a citizen and as a Muslim." "Because I believe in being accountable to Allah, I do not take advantage of people, even if my competitors do," said a businessman in Peshawar. "I think it is important to be accountable to Allah." In addition, teachers reported that they encouraged their students to assist one another, participate in volunteer work, and adhere to the regulations that were established in the classroom. However, they did discuss the fact that structural issues, such as large class sizes, the pressure from examinations, and a lack of adequate teacher preparation, made it more difficult to engage in more in-depth practise.

Challenges and Institutional/Societal Tensions

Multiple respondents pointed to tensions between ideals and practices, and institutional constraints. Among the key challenges:

- **Culture vs. religious values:** Some participants felt that cultural practices often overshadow or distort Islamic ethics. A scholar noted: "Many practices we think are Islam, are actually culture. That creates confusion about true values."

- **Modernity, materialism and value erosion:** Several respondents identified the influence of consumerist culture, individualism and globalised values as diluting Islamic moral orientation. A businessperson admitted: “It is hard to stand by ethics when everyone else is cutting corners. The pressure to succeed materially is strong.”
- **Education system limitations:** Teachers reiterated that the formal system emphasised knowledge transmission rather than character formation, despite policy expectations. Large classes, shortage of trained teachers of Islamic pedagogy, and curriculum overload were cited. The historical review of Pakistan’s education reforms supports such constraints (Bilal & Haseeb, 2025).
- **Organisational/institutional constraints:** In public sector and business, systemic corruption, weak accountability, political interference, and lack of ethical leadership impede the practice of values. The study on Islamic work ethics in Pakistan shows that ethical leadership significantly moderates the link between IWE and job performance (Usman, Hanif & Aamish, 2024). Without leadership commitment, values remain rhetorical.
- **Sectarian and interpretive diversity:** Participants noted that differing interpretations of Islamic teachings, sectarian divides and regional disparities lead to inconsistent application of ethics. One teacher commented: “What one school defines as moral may differ from another due to sectarian orientation. That confuses students.”

Enablers, Opportunities and Recommendations

Despite challenges, respondents identified enablers and offered recommendations:

- **Role of teacher training and pedagogy:** Many stressed the need for teacher capacity building in value-based pedagogy (active learning, reflection, service projects) rather than rote teaching.
- **Curriculum integration and coherence:** Participants recommended embedding Islamic moral ethics across subjects, not just Islamiyat, so values become lived rather than boxed into one subject.
- **Leadership commitment:** In organisations, ethical leadership, transparent systems, accountability, and aligning institutional culture with Islamic values were seen as vital.
- **Community and family involvement:** Socialisation in the home, mosque, voluntary associations and peer groups strengthen internalisation of ethics. Role modelling was highlighted.
- **Policy and institutional reform:** Several respondents advocated for national education policy reforms to operationalise Article 31 of the Constitution (which mandates education according to Qur’an and Sunnah) and ensure resources and teacher development (Bilal & Haseeb, 2025).

- **Use of modern technologies and contexts:** Some participants suggested using contemporary platforms (social media, digital campaigns) to disseminate Islamic ethics and counter value erosion from materialism.

Discussion

Participants consistently linked ethical principles to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and they expressed virtues such as truthfulness, trustworthiness, justice, kindness, and social responsibility. The findings of the study provide evidence that Islamic values and ethics hold a central place in the moral framework of a significant number of Pakistanis. The findings of this study are consistent with those of previous studies (Shaukat & Basharat, 2022; Hayat, 2025).

It is important to note that there is a big gap between the conceptualisation and the implementation of the idea. People aspire to live their lives in accordance with Islamic norms, yet it is difficult to do so completely due to the existence of structural, institutional, and cultural hurdles. Despite the fact that their pedagogical techniques are limited and do not place a priority on practical internalisation, teachers in Pakistan believe that moral principles are inextricably tied to Islamic values. This is consistent with the findings of educational research conducted in Pakistan (Siddiqui & Habib, 2022). There are also organisational studies on Islamic work ethic that highlight the role of psychological capital and ethical leadership (Usman, Hanif, and Aamish, 2024).

These are factors that were also underlined by observers in this study.

A significant source of contention emerged as a result of the influence that culture and modernity played. Even if Islamic ethics offer an objective and immutable moral framework, the participants recognized that lived reality is adaptable and influenced by contemporary requirements, materialistic pressures, and global cultural exchanges. This aligns with the concept that Islamic ethics, rooted in immutable sources, stand in contrast to the relativistic and subjective moral frameworks dominant in post-modern discourse (Shaukat & Basharat, 2022). From an educational and institutional perspective, the integration of Islamic ethics requires more than mere subject instruction; it necessitates a comprehensive transformation of the educational environment, including curriculum development, educator training, pedagogical methodologies, organizational culture, and leadership. Bilal and Haseeb (2025) assert that the historical-legal examination of the integration of Islamic principles into Pakistan's educational framework underscores the necessity of converting legislative and constitutional intent.

First, ethical leadership in organizations enhances the application of Islamic ethics; second, value-based teacher training can bridge the divide between knowledge and practice; third, socialization within community and family settings remains crucial; and fourth, modern technologies and media must be employed to communicate and embody Islamic values in contemporary contexts. These are some of the practical insights that the study provides. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that Islamic values and ethics are significant for Pakistanis; yet, in order to put these concepts into practice, there must be systematic support and coherence across all socioeconomic areas.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative research is to investigate Islamic principles, ethics, and practices in Pakistan. The study aims to provide light on the ways in which individuals conceptualise, internalise, and implement moral norms that are drawn from Islam, as well as the institutional and societal restrictions that they will meet. This illustrates that, despite a strong normative commitment to Islamic ethics, the actual execution of Islamic ethics is constrained by limits relating to modernity, education, culture, and organisations.

Changing the way that teachers are trained and the way that they teach in order to instill moral values in their students; ensuring that the curriculum and the culture of the school are in accordance with Islamic ethics; encouraging ethical leadership in organisations; involving families and communities in the process of teaching values; and utilising media and technology to strengthen value frameworks are some of the most important suggestions. In order for Islamic ethical values to be put into practice, it is essential for policymakers to address the systemic obstacles that exist in the areas of education, public service, and industry.

For the purpose of future research, this study may be statistically expanded in order to determine the prevalence of value-practice gaps, analyse regional and sectarian variances, analyse gender-specific dynamics of Islamic ethics in Pakistan, or undertake longitudinal studies on the development of value internalisation over time.

At the end of the day, the research highlights the fact that the inclusion of Islamic principles and ethics in Pakistan goes beyond merely incorporating them into the curriculum or making announcements; rather, it requires a comprehensive integration across all aspects of society, including cultural, institutional, and personal domains. Not only does the achievement of this integration hold hope for the development of morality, but it also holds promise for the creation of a socially responsible, ethical, and resilient society in Pakistan.

References

Khanum, Tasmia. "A Hit and Miss Survival Struggle of Traumatized Civilians in Serhiy Zhadan Novel The Orphanage." DefinePK, 2025, define.pk/document.php?id=427008&type=article&jid=436.

Linda Kantor Swerdlow (Author of Global Activism in an American School). www.goodreads.com/author/show/6748791.Linda_Kantor_Swerdlow.

Nataliya, View All Posts By. "'The Internat' by Serhiy Zhadan." Books Are Life, 26 Aug. 2022, nataliyabookblog.wordpress.com/2022/08/25/the-orphanage-by-serhiy-zhadan.

Storozhuk, Svitlana, et al. "Mental Health after Trauma: Individual and Collective Dimensions." *Wiadomości Lekarskie*, vol. 75, no. 8, 2022, pp. 1924–1931. <https://doi.org/10.36740/wlek202208119>. Accessed 4 Nov. 2022.

Swerdlow, Linda Kantor. (Author of Global Activism in an American School*).* www.goodreads.com/author/show/6748791.Linda_Kantor_Swerdlow.

“Ukraine: Apparent War Crimes in Russia-Controlled Areas.” Human Rights Watch, 11 Oct. 2022, www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas.

Van Creveld, Martin. Transformation of War. Simon and Schuster, 2009.

Zaharchenko, Tanya. “The Synchronous War Novel: Ordeal of the Unarmed Person in Serhiy Zhadan’s Internat.” Slavic Review, vol. 78, no. 2, 2019, pp. 410–429. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2019.95>. Accessed 19 Dec. 2020