The Integration of Contemporary Education into Islamic Religious Education in the Hazara Division, Pakistan

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This study aimed to look into the integration of modern education into Islamic religious educational institutions. To achieve this goal, a mixed research technique was used. A purposive sample technique was used with 288 participants, including students, teachers, and administrators from Islamic religious educational institutes where the eight-year Dars-e-Nizami course was taught. The information was gathered using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. According to the findings, IREIs provide free schooling, housing, and food to their students, maintain libraries but lack ICT facilities, and their curricula only address specific religious and spiritual needs of the community. Both of the stakeholders saw contemporary education as a critical tool in the fight against Islamophobia, and they advocated for the inclusion of contemporary education and language learning in their institutions.

Key words: *Integration, contemporary education, Islamic religious education institutes (IREIs).*

Introduction

Pakistan is a constitutionally democratic and Islamic country of which the vast majority of its population are Muslims. In 1947 Pakistan declared an independent state with Islamic laws, from British rule. Pakistan has multiple school education systems consisting of private English education, Government education system, and Madrasa Islamic education system.

The supremacy of education to change human beings positively has made education important since the inception of Islam (Al-Alwani, 1995). Education in Islam is derived from the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him) in Surat Al-Alaq where Allah SWT (Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala) commanded the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to read to combat illiteracy. Science and non-science education, as well as religious and modern education, are examples of education dualism. Different educational systems are run parallel to one another in education dualism (Al-Attas, 1993). In Pakistan's current educational system, there is dual education in terms of religious and modern education. Also, Al-Faruqi (1982) opined that both the religious and modern education systems should be integrated for students to have the appropriate knowledge. In order to resist secularism in Muslim communities in Uganda, dualistic education is not good for Muslim education, and an integrated curriculum should be chosen (Matovu, 2013). Allawi (2009); Haneef (2009); and Siddiqi (2011) reported that that mostly Muslim countries are eradicating dualism in their education system. Integrated education has been recommended by most scholars because it brings about the impartial human being as both kinds of knowledge (religious and modern) to touch on all aspects of human domains (Al-Attas, 1993; Baba, 2006; and Lubis & Wekke, 2009). A curriculum with both religious and modern knowledge produces stability among individuals from the Islamic perspective in terms of minds, bodies, and souls of students or by developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Brohi, 1988; Rahman, 1988; Al-Alwani & Khalil, 1991; Al-Attas, 1993; Baba, 2006 and 2010; Haneef, 2009; Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009; Lubis & Wekke, 2009; and Siddiqi, 2011). Integrated education gives students training that makes them proficient in their professions and also allows them to become devoted to Allah SWT in their work while considering the Hereafter (Lubis, 2008). An integrated curriculum unifies the different kinds of knowledge intending to develop the ummah concerning Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah (Rahman, 1988; and Al-Alwani & Khalil, 1991). Integrated education works on the principle that if students understand modern knowledge and their religious obligation to mankind in accordance to the Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah they serve effectively, they are just, and pious in their profession (Al-Faruqi, 1988; Rahman, 1988; Al-Alwani & Khalil, 1991; Abu Sulayman, 1994b; and Khalil, 1995). Teaching religious and modern knowledge to students at the same time produces graduates who do not involve themselves in negative activities due to their fear of Allah SWT (Rahman, 1988; Al-Alwani & Khalil, 1991; Khalil, 1995; Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009; Lubis & Wekke, 2009; and Baba, 2010).

In Islam faith and science are connected, because both play the same role (Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009). In Muslim education, it is not worthwhile to ignore religious studies in the teaching of empirical sciences (Lubis, 2008). Through holistic education, students will be able to perform their duties according to the divine law of Islam (Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009). Furthermore, integrated education can assist learners in upholding beliefs of Islam, laws of Islam and ideals in their lives and professions. (Al-Alwani, 1995; Haneef, 2005; and Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009).

Islamic institutions would not only produce people to become religious leaders and mosque Imams but also will train people who are "good" doctors, lawyers, engineers, social scientists, and so on (Sikand, 2009). It can also be hoped that the graduates of the integrated curriculum will be free from un-Islamic practices such as discrimination, monopoly, exploitation (ribah), charging interest (usary) among others which Allah SWT forbids.

The utmost objectives of integrated education should be to produce competent professionals who are devoted to their Allah SWT (Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala). The religious studies graduates would have taken in an integrated curriculum would bring long life which would boost their moral, physical, and spiritual development in terms of their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Al-Ataas, 1993; and Lubis & Wekke, 2009). In an integrated curriculum, learners would be able to consider the world and the Hereafter in their education simultaneously. It would also be of great value when students with high academic achievements have good morals to protect them from getting involved in forbidden activities by Allah SWT. Through integrated education, Muslim graduates would be trained to understand and uphold the belief of Islam, the law of Islam, and follow it in their lives (Lubis, Mustapha & Lampoh, 2009). Integrated education would offer guidance to humankind and also promote a healthy civilisation to reject education dualism and to resist secularism from spreading in the Muslim communities.

Education is a tool for nation-building and individual development. It polishes people, makes them responsible citizens, and prepares them for the challenges of today's world (Khalid, 2004). Science education describes the nature and its operations systems, social sciences describe human social life and its aspects and religious education deals with the meaning of life and with moral issues (Saifullah, Tabrani, & Fikri, 2018). Religious education is a religious studies approach, a platform where students learn religious traditions and values perspectives (Parker, 2017). From an Islamic perspective education must be for all human beings, a famous Hadith mentions that "seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim, male and female" (Hasan, 2017). "Are those who know equality to those who do not know?" asks Surah Al-Zumer of the importance of knowledge (The Holy Quran, 39:09). Modern education incorporates technology into educational institutions, enhancing student achievement and extending interactions with local and global communities that were previously unavailable. In the Islamic world, including Pakistan, educational institutions dedicated to the Islamic religion have existed for centuries (Khalid, 2004).

According to Nisar (2010), in Pakistan, three different education systems coexist; the government education system, the private education system, and Islamic religious educational institutions. Aşlamacı and Kaymakcan, (2017) stated that Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia are examples of Muslim countries where madrasas operate outside of state control and are run by Islamic communities as an alternative to formal education institutions. Because they are outside of state control, some of these institutions promote an extremist Islamic viewpoint, endangering social cohesion and stability in the countries mentioned, and

thus the existence of Islamic education in madrasas is a major issue. According to Bukhari and Rahman (2006), the various educational structures in Pakistan serve as origins for various social classes, laying the groundwork for potential social conflicts. Islamic religious educational institutions in Pakistan are currently being heavily chastised in the national and international media for their out-of-date educational system and suspected links to militants. According to Raiz (2005), following the events of 9/11 in the United States, Western countries have criticised the educational institutes of religious education, with a belief that these institutes inculcate terrorism (Jihad) in the minds of students. According to Haqqani (2002), most western writers associate Pakistan's IREIs with insurgency, populism, and militancy. In Pakistan, Islamic Religious Educational Institutions adopt curriculum in their schools, that fully disregards the curriculum established by the Ministry of Education. Due to a lack of modern education in IREIs, students are ignorant of other people's perspectives, and they tend to think in one-sided ways. The world has become a global village where people of different faiths must deal with and engage with one another (Nisar, 2010). The majority of people in Pakistan come from poor families, and they send their children to IREIs, which provide free education. Although these IREIs do a commendable job of imparting religious education, they do not prepare their graduates for job opportunities comparable to those available to graduates of modern education systems. At most, Islamic religious educational institutes produce prayer leaders (imam/khatib), who are unable to keep up with the times or face global challenges due to a lack of modern education. The IERIs have been rebuked in recent decades, especially after 9/11, for their out-of-date curriculum and instilling the seeds of extremism in the minds of their learners (Riaz, 2005). It is critical to pay attention to this topic, as these institutes have the potential to become hubs of modern and religious education, with graduates able to find work in all levels of government and keep up with the modern world.

According to Shah, Kausar, and Sial (2014), there were no IREIs or Masajids in the early period of Islam, and religious scholars' homes were used as learning centers. During the Prophet Muhammad SAW's lifetime, the Suffah (a room or verandah linked to the Masjid Nabvi for learning) was the center of religious education and understanding. Makdisi (1981) also claims that in the early days of Islam, mosques and homes were centers of learning, which developed into IREIs in the 11th century. Early in Islamic history, organised learning centers arose in Arabia as Islamic religious educational institutions. The state-supported the majority of the IREIs, and kings/caliphs used to seek the Imams' approval on a variety of issues to legitimise their acts. As a result, the Imams were relatively free in religious matters, particularly those that did not affect the state (Rahman, 1982). Baitul Hikmat, a center of higher learning and research, was established by the Abbasid Caliph Haroon ur Rasheed in the early ninth century. The first organised IREIs are said to be Baitul Hikmat in Baghdad, Jami'at al Qarawiyin in Fas, Morocco, Jamiat ul Azhar in Cairo, Egypt, and Madrasa Nizamia in Baghdad. Dar ul Uloom Muhammadia Ghousiya in Sargodha, Pakistan, for example, has effectively combined religious and secular education. In Pakistan, successive governments

have attempted to integrate IREIs into the mainstream education system, but progress has been slow. In this sense, the Ayub Khan regime, the Zia ul Haq regime, the National Educational Policy of 1979, the National Educational Policy of 1998, the Pervez Musharraf regime, and the National Education Policy of 2009, among others, all speak plainly about the integration of contemporary education in Islamic Religious Education. These institutes have lack of sufficient educational resources and areunable to educate them to face and compete global challenges.

Research Methodology

The objective of this study isto assess the situation regarding the integration of contemporary education in Islamic educational institutions. This current study adopted a mixed-method research design to explore the views of stakeholders regarding the above phenomena. Purposive sampling techniques were used and 150 students receiving eight years of education in Islamic institutes, called as Dars-e-Nizami in Hazara division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and their 60 teachers and 18 administrators in these institutes were respondents of the study. They were chosen ase direct stakeholders of the Islamic institutes. For this purpose, a Likert-type questionnaire was developed to analyse the opinions of students and teachers about the integration of contemporary education in Islamic educational institutes. While a semi-structured interview protocol was utilised to collect data from administrators of the Islamic religious institutes in this regard.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: situational analysis of integration of contemporary education in Islamic religious education

S.No	Statements	Mean
1	Students of IREIs are interested in the blend of contemporary and religious education	4.53
2	Administrators of IREIs support the integration of contemporary education in their institutions.	4.20
3	Students of IREIs spread the Islamic message around the world by studying different languages	4.91
4	Religious scholars can draw the greatest number of people to Islamic Religious Educational Institutes by combining religious and contemporary education.	4.85
5	The combination of religious and contemporary education empowers religious scholars to provide the solution to problems relating to the modern era	4.70
6	Blends of religious and contemporary education empower religious scholars to guide the young generation which is tilted towards Westernisation.	4.69
7	The blend of religious and contemporary education enables religious scholars to gain prominence among religious veterans and worldly veterans.	4.62
8	Board of Wifaqul Madaris supports the integration of contemporary and religious education in IREIs.	4.60
9	A blend of religious and contemporary education is urgently needed in IREIs.	4.34
10	The combination of religious and contemporary education boosts job opportunities for the graduates of IREIs.	4.30
11	ICTs are beneficial for IREIs students learning to compete with other scholars	4.67

Teachers and students in an Islamic religious educational institution decided to incorporate contemporary education, as seen in table 1. That Students of IREIs are interested in the blend of contemporary and religious education (M=4.53); Administrators of IREIs support the integration of contemporary education in their institution (M=4.20). The mean score shows that Students of IREIs spread the Islamic message around the world by studying different languages (M=4.91), religious scholars can draw the greatest number of people to Islamic Religious Educational Institutes by combining religious and contemporary education

(M=4.85);, and combination of religious and contemporary education empowers religious scholars to provide solutions to problems relating to the modern era (M=4.70). The table shows that a blend of religious and contemporary education enables religious scholars to gain prominence among religious veterans and worldly veterans (M=4.62), blends of religious and contemporary education empower religious scholars to guide the young generation which is tilted towards Westernisation (M=4.69), the board of Wifaqul Madaris supports the integration of contemporary and religious education in IREIs (M=4.60).

According to table 1, respondents agreed with the statements that "a blend of religious and contemporary education is urgently needed in IREIs (M=4.34)", "Combination of religious and contemporary education boosts job opportunities for the graduates of IREIs" (M=4.30), and ICTs is beneficial for IREIs students learning to compete with other scholars (M=4.67).

Results from semi-structured interviews

The majority of administrators agreed that religious and contemporary education should be combined in IREIs, but that religious education should take precedence. According to a variety of administrators, IREIs, for example, cater to both religious and contemporary education, indicating integration. One of the administrators reported that "we support the integration of modern education in IREIs". In previous centuries, there was no distinction between religious and contemporary education, and religious scholars were the bearers of both. Integration does not imply that all contemporary subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, and philosophy be incorporated into IREIs' curriculum, but rather that certain important contemporary subjects be incorporated into the IREIs' curriculum without affecting the eight-year Dars-e-Nizami course.

The inclusion of basic contemporary education in IREIs is supported by respondents. Students who have not received a modern education and wish to enrol in the Dars-e-Nizami program are already receiving a basic modern education in subjects such as mathematics, English, Urdu, general science, and social studies up to the secondary school level. Students cannot continue their education after high school because they must complete a lengthy Dars-e-Nizami course before becoming religious scholars. In modern educational institutions, the same pattern is followed, with students enrolling in medical, engineering, and humanities programs and specialising in related fields.

The majority of the administrators, on the other hand, argued that integration should be done in such a way that religious subjects take priority over contemporary subjects. This way of thinking is exemplified by the following quotes:

According to one administrator, "integration is necessary, but religious subjects (specialised) must take precedence, with contemporary subjects taking a back seat".

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Laghari, et al (2011) and Laghari, Abro., & JAFRI, 2012), who found that: (1) job opportunities for Madrassa educated students are comparatively limited; (2) despite the fact that the IREI curriculum is not compatible with modern needs and work markets, the majority of students are happy with the IREI curriculum; and (3) students eagerly urged that the Madrassa education system be integrated with modern education. Students wanted science and technology courses to be taught in the Madrassa system and stressed the convergence of modern scientific subjects with religious subjects. (4) The students went on to say that the organisers of Madrassa are also opposed to the integration of the madrassa education system with the modern education system since the organisers are unsure of the government's intention to integrate. Due to communication differences and misunderstandings, Madrassa organisers reject the incorporation of Madrassa and modern education systems. Peace is valued in the Madrassa system of education, and extremism is despised. Islamic and modern sciences can be seen as one indivisible entity reflecting Islamic intellectual values based on the Qur'an and Sunnah through integrated Islamic education (Laghari, Abro., & JAFRI, 2012).

Islamic and modern sciences can be seen as one indivisible body that genuinely represents Islamic intellectual ideals founded on the Qur'an and Sunnah in integrated Islamic education (Ramly, Walidin, & Idris, 2018). Multicultural values have been integrated into Islamic religious education. Ubabuddinb and Malang (2020),

The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews showed that the majority of administrators believe that integration does not mean including all contemporary subjects in the curriculum of IREIs, such as physics, chemistry, biology, and philosophy, but rather including some specific contemporary subjects of importance in the curriculum of IREIs without affluence. In this regard, the majority of administrators advocated for incorporating contemporary education into IREIs in such a way that religious education takes precedence over contemporary education. Candidates with a contemporary education at the middle/secondary school level are eligible for IREI's grand admissions in the Dars-e-Nizami course. Those who do not meet the requirements but want to apply for admission will receive a basic contemporary education (English, Maths, Urdu, General Science, and Social Studies) up to the middle school level before enrolling in the Dars-e-Nizami program. Contemporary education cannot coexist with Dars-e-Nizami education because students must complete a long course to become religious scholars. In modern educational institutions, students enter faculties of medicine, engineering, and humanities after passing secondary school examinations and acquiring the requisite knowledge. Ahmed (2009) found that because most madrasa graduates (despite attending school for eight years) have no understanding of important subjects like Economics, Science, or Computing, madrasa reforms are critical for Pakistan's development and progress. While this may not have been a major concern a few decades ago, in today's world, such limited education may not be sufficient to meet the country's development needs. Nonetheless, the madrasa reform process's long-term viability

will be determined in part by political will, and in part by the success of poverty-reduction efforts.

Recommendations

1: Jamiatur Rasheed Karachi, according to the respondents, is a model religious educational institution that provides religious education to those with contemporary education and contemporary education to those with religious education. Governments could adopt this model and set up similar educational institutions across the country.

2: Due to a lack of resources, IREIs are unable to hire professional teachers for contemporary subjects; as a result, it is suggested that the government provide teachers for contemporary education in IREIs by providing financial incentives.

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