

**ISLAMIC EDUCATION AS PERCEIVED BY  
EDUPRENEURS OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS -  
CONFORMANCE WITH THE TEACHINGS OF  
*THE HOLY QUR'ĀN***

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**Abstract**

Despite expressly stating the aims and objectives of education in its policy documents, the Government of Pakistan has failed to bring out the essence of emergence of Islamic education from the Islamic ideology. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has remained a passive receptor of secular pedagogical models imported from the West. However, private Islamic schools, which is a segment of private schools, that has emerged since the last forty years, claim to impart modern education while adhering to the Islamic education system. To determine the authenticity of this claim, it is necessary to conform and verify their claimed aims and objectives with those as prescribed by Islam. This qualitative study, using phenomenological research methodology, explores the aims and objectives of five private Islamic schools through interviews and document reviews. The aims and objectives were analyzed in the light of Islamic education as articulated by Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic scholar. Al-Ghazali's aims and objectives were outlined using content analysis. The study concludes that although private Islamic schools have perceived aims similar to those of Al-Ghazali, yet the planned objectives and basic educational structure of Islamic schools such as institution structure, education

delivery framework, child learning psychology, curriculum, language focus and assessment methodology are adopted from the western world. The government, Islamic school administrators, and other stakeholders will benefit from the findings of this study.

**Keywords:** *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, Al-Ghazali's Educational Thoughts, Islamic Education, Islamic Schools*

## 1. Introduction

As a system, schools intake young students in batches, which are termed as grades or classes and then pass them through an established curriculum for ten to twelve years. This passing through a rigorous process enables the young students to pursue either higher education or engage themselves in earning activities. But this process is not an inert or innocent activity, as the curriculum is designed precisely to achieve certain objectives around ideological agendas.<sup>1</sup> The rationale for establishment of school structure is well explained by Gatto,<sup>2</sup> which is to control and predict the human behaviour. Althusser considers school education as a stronger ideological state apparatus as compared to religious, family, legal and political apparatuses in achieving state agendas.<sup>3</sup>

Its basic goals are the continuation of the current social organization and sustain national economic growth.<sup>4</sup> Dewey asserts that "There is a great deal of indoctrination now going on in the schools, especially with reference to narrow nationalism under the name of patriotism and with reference to the dominant economic regime".<sup>5</sup> Hence, a state endeavours to develop the education system to achieve its national objectives. Countries like America, England, France, Russia and China, have tailor made their education systems to meet their ideological requirements.

With regards to Pakistan, the country's education system is fundamentally governed through educational policies, which are derived from the past and prevailing constitutions. The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, which is the prevalent constitution, clearly indicates that all our systems, including financial, economic, educational, judiciary and others should be in line with the teachings of *the Holy Qur'an* and Sunnah.<sup>6</sup> With regards to education, the same principle is reiterated in article 31(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973; wherein, the state of Pakistan is required to assist Muslims to follow the basic principles and concepts of Islam.<sup>7</sup> These constitutional guidelines are also considered in Pakistan's education policies and categorically state that all the principles of

Pakistan's educational policy interventions should be in line with the constitution of Pakistan, 1973.<sup>8</sup>

As such, the goals of education which should be based on Islamic ideology, should not remain vague. Since Islam believes in an integrated life, there is no notion of dichotomy in education between Islamic education and secular education. To educate its followers, Islam stands for a comprehensive and consolidated system; however, at present, this comprehensive and consolidated Islamic education system does not exist, even in Muslim majority countries like Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> Although more than seventy years have elapsed since Pakistan's independence in 1947, it still represents a society, which is a passive receptor of secular educational paradigms, imported from the Western world.<sup>10</sup> Goals to design the educational system around the ideological perspective of Pakistan still remain stagnant and docile and not much has been achieved on the ground.<sup>11</sup>

In Pakistan, educational institutions for children can broadly be divided in two categories: schools and *Madāris*. The ownership structure of schools can be classified into three: (a) public schools; (b) private schools, and (c) adopted schools (government schools adopted and managed by private sector). Within the umbrella of private schools, a growth of new segment of schools can be witnessed, which can be titled as 'Private Islamic Schools'. These schools are similar to the conventional private schools in all aspects except that these schools claim to impart modern education along with Islamic education while remaining in compliance with *Shari'ah*. Such private Islamic schools are run by edupreneurs (entrepreneurs in the field of education) as well as non-profit organizations. Shulman elucidates that edupreneur is "usually mission-driven and ... found building new education organizations and businesses, developing the latest EdTech tools, running new schools".<sup>12</sup>

## **2. Statement of the Research Problem**

Although a segment of private Islamic schools was initiated around forty years ago, endeavouring to impart education based on Islamic ideology. However, it is yet to be established whether the proclaimed aims and objectives are in line with those as guided by *the Holy Qur'ān*.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the conceptions of Islamic schools in Pakistan regarding the aims and objectives of education and analyze whether these aims and objectives are in conformance with those as guided by *the Holy Qur'ān*.

#### 4. Research Questions

For the above-mentioned research purpose, this study focused on finding answers to the following research questions:

1. What conceptions do the edupreneurs of Pakistani Private Islamic schools have about the aims and objectives of education system from the Islamic perspective?
2. What are the aims and objectives of Islamic education in the light of *the Holy Qur'ān* as articulated by Al-Ghazali?
3. To what extent do the aims and objectives of Pakistani private Islamic schools conform to those as guided by *the Holy Qur'ān*?

#### 5. Significance of this Study

This study will contribute in the following aspects of education:

- It will bring into picture an important aspect in the Islamisation of school education and conceptions developed by the contemporary edupreneurs and educators about Islamic education.
- It will present as to what aims and objectives of Islamic education can be drawn from the thoughts and philosophy of Al-Ghazali.
- It will help in unifying the aims and objectives of existing Islamic Schools.
- It can provide a foundation for incorporating Al-Ghazali's work into the educational curricula of the modern Islamic world.

#### 6. Literature review

“Every nation in the world structures its educational programme to promote its specific culture and ideology”.<sup>13</sup> Similarly the objectives of education in a Muslim country cannot be identical with the educational aims of the Western nations.<sup>14</sup> Further, Ali and Hussien assert that Islamic education's goals must be derived from *the Holy Qur'ān* and Sunnah. Accordingly, Islamic states, being ideological states, should develop an educational system in accordance with the Islamic principles.<sup>15</sup>

Islam is not merely a set of religious activities, but it is a total way of life. Accordingly, Islam neither permits its segregation from any aspect of life, nor does it permit dichotomy in Islamic education.<sup>16</sup> Shakeel, while elaborating this dichotomy in education opines that these systems are mutually exclusive and contradictory educational philosophies.<sup>17</sup> Further, Mabud implies that Islamic and Western civilizations are built on diametrically opposed conceptions of life and are not compatible in spirit.<sup>18</sup> Islam stands for one

comprehensive and consolidated system for educating its followers. Unfortunately, this consolidated and comprehensive Islamic education system does not exist at present.<sup>19</sup> Further, it is observed that no coherent and organized efforts have been made so far in Pakistan, either by the government sector nor by the private sector for the conceptualization of an effective Islamic educational system at the school level.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the history of Pakistan, a number of intellectuals and educationists have been striving to purge the above-mentioned yoke from Pakistan's education system. Their aim is to develop an education system around the Islamic ideology for schools. Nevertheless, these efforts have largely been launched on individual basis<sup>21</sup> and coordinated efforts by private sector can hardly be witnessed. Effort can also be observed in the shape of Islamic schools, which was initiated around forty years ago. Islamic education is not a novel practice in Pakistan, keeping politico-historical factors of the country in view. Islamic school is yet, a unique and first experiment, which has gained popularity.<sup>22</sup> In these schools, both Matric and O' Levels streams are adopted with respect to curriculum. In spite of the fact that there is some agreement about the perceived aims of an Islamic education system by the educators; nevertheless, they differ largely on the way they draw and prioritize their objectives.<sup>23</sup>

The present research explores the conceptions about aims and objectives of school education as adopted by the private educators of Islamic schools in Pakistan. These conceptions have been analysed in the light of aims and objectives of education as derived from Al-Ghazali's teachings. Several Muslim scholars have pointed out that much of Al-Ghazali's advices on teaching and learning are still relevant today and have been widely accepted as conforming to the Quranic principles. His teachings are applicable not only to the Muslim world, but also to the non-Muslim world's educational systems.<sup>24</sup> The Middle Eastern educator and writer, Al-Ghazali, has been described as one of the most influential scholars in the Islamic history and is considered as a reformer (mujaddid) of the eleventh century (fifth century A.H.) and also titled as 'the Proof of Islam'.<sup>25</sup>

The aims and objectives of education from Al-Ghazali's perspective are derived from English and Urdu translations of his works, especially his book *Al-Iḥyā -i 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Ayyuhal-Walad* and from the research articles and PhD thesis relevant to this research. The author's literature review reveals that some studies<sup>26</sup> have explored Al-Ghazali's views on parental concerns of education and issues regarding children's education. Few studies are also found analysing the aims and objectives of Islamic schools in the light of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal ('Allāmaḥ

*Iqbal*).<sup>27</sup> However, an analysis of the conceptions of Islamic schools in Pakistan regarding the aims and objectives of education in the light of Al-Ghazali's conceptions of aims and objectives of Islamic education is yet lacking.

## 7. Research Methodology

### 7.1. Qualitative Research

Before selecting the most appropriate methodology for any study, the key factor that has to be addressed is that it should be able to respond to the research questions and thereby meet the research goals. With this principle in mind, the most appropriate methodology for this research would be the qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research can be well explained in terms of its defining features. Marshall and Rossman explain that the qualitative study is used to inquire and explore the perceptions and views of participants about their experiences.<sup>28</sup>

### 7.2 Phenomenology

Three approaches are given by Rossman and Rallis, which are case studies, ethnology, and phenomenological within the context of qualitative study.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Creswell and Poth discuss five conventional inquiry methods for qualitative studies, which are narrative studies, case studies, grounded theories, phenomenological studies, and ethnographic studies.<sup>30</sup> Whereas a narrative research reports the life of a single person, a phenomenological study explains the significance of a term or a phenomenon through many persons of their lived experiences.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, this study used qualitative method using phenomenological approach.

### 7.3 Sampling

The sampling technique for this research study was non-probability purposive sampling. As advocated by Patton, "The logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in depth studying".<sup>32</sup>

#### 7.3.1 Participants and Research Context

The number of participants depends upon the research approach being used. Creswell and Creswell explain that there is no specific answer to the question of how many participants should be selected for a qualitative research.<sup>33</sup> He has suggested a range from three to ten participants for phenomenological approach.<sup>34</sup>

Sample size for the study was five edupreneurs of Islamic private schools. In case of schools run by organizations, the person who was responsible for upholding and implementing the education as per the vision of the school was considered. These schools also met the following criteria:

- These are at least ten years old in age.
- These have classes from grade 1 to 10 (or 11 in case of O Levels).
- These have at least five thousand students.

The reasons for selecting these schools were as following:

- These schools are conceptually and organisationally well structured.
- These have a greater representation, indicating its acceptability in the masses.
- A body or a group of people are behind its vision and it has not been changed by in management at any point.

Private schools were selected for the following main reasons:

- Government schools do not proclaim to be Islamic schools.
- 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.

#### **7.4 Research Instruments**

**7.4.1 Interviews:** The conceptions of five Islamic educators were explored using interviews for standardized open-ended questionnaire developed and arranged by the researcher with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence. This interview questionnaire comprised of probes as well. Interview protocol was developed for a proper guide through the interview. This protocol included the following:

- Respondent related information
- Pre-interview introduction by the interviewer
- Interview questions and probes
- Consent form

**7.4.2 Pilot Study:** A pilot interview was conducted on a private Islamic school, which was not included in the research sample. The short comings noted led to correction and modification of the interview

protocol and also to add a few more probing questions. The pilot test assists the researcher in refining contents, wording, length, etc. and also assists in its validity.<sup>35</sup> The modified interview protocol was reviewed by two educational experts for verification of internal validity, who suggested few modifications, which were incorporated.

**7.4.3 Document Review:** Document review of Al-Ghazali's work was done to explore his articulated educational aims and objectives. Primary source of data collection was translation of books written by Al-Ghazali, mainly *Kitābul-‘Ilm* (Book of Knowledge) of *Al-Iḥyā -ī ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Munqidh Min al-Dalāl* (Deliverance from Error) and *Mīzān ul-‘Amal* (Yardstick of Actions). Both Urdu and English translations were read. Other contents included research articles and dissertations on the relevant topic. The books prescribed in the curricula of the selected schools for Class 1 (primary section) and Class 6 (secondary section) were also reviewed to understand the linkage between the curriculum and aims and objectives of the respondents.

### 7.5 Data Analysis

Creswell & Poth, Merriam & Tisdell and Patton have given a comprehensive guide for data analysis and explicating valid information from the participants, which was followed in this research.<sup>36</sup> It is briefly enlisted in the following steps:

- Transcribing the recorded interviews
- Bracketing and phenomenological reduction
- Listening to the interview to get a gist and sense of the whole interview
- Thematic analysis for transcribing and interpreting the data will be applied using the following steps:
  - Clustering the different parts of transcription with relevant meaning
  - Determining themes from the cluster of meanings: the central theme emerges from different clusters
  - Writing a summary for each individual interview
- Return to the respondents with descriptions and contents of the interviews for their confirmation on constructed meanings
- Contextualization of themes
- Composite summary
- Data triangulation using literature from their syllabus books

### 7.6 Research Findings

In order to better understand the responses, below is a brief profile of the schools along with the edupreneur's introduction. To maintain confidentiality pseudonym have been used for respondents.

**7.6.1 School 1.** Maryam's school has been operating for more than twenty-five years and has branches in Karachi. The total number of students is more than 5,000 male and female students in 10 branches. The education system followed is both Matriculation and O'Levels. Maryam is the Principal and Directress of this school.

**7.6.2 School 2.** Rehan's school is operating for more than thirty years and has branches in all four provinces. The total number of students is more than 75,000 in more than 180 branches. The education system followed is Matriculation. Rehan is the Principal and one of the founders of the school.

**7.6.3 School 3.** Kashif's school is operating for more than twenty-five years and has branches in all four provinces. The strength of students is more than 160,000 with more than 550 branches. The education system followed is Matriculation. Kashif is the Principal and Chief Executive of the school.

**7.6.4 School 4.** Kamran's school has been operating for more than twenty-five years and has branches in all four provinces. The total number of students is more than 70,000 with more than 200 branches. The education system followed is Matriculation. Kamran is the In-charge of the whole system.

**7.6.5 School 5.** Atif's school has been operating for more than twenty years and has branches in all four provinces. The total number of students is more than 80,000 in more than 500 branches. The education system followed is Matriculation. Atif is the Head of research and curriculum wing.

## **8. Aims of Education from Islamic Perspective: The Educators' Conceptions**

For the purpose of better understanding, the aims of education were categorised into two: 'Primary aims' and 'Other aims'. Primary aims of education were kept at the highest priority level in comparison to 'Other aims' and it directly related to the vision of the school. The interview protocol was designed accordingly. Findings from the data collected through interviews from five educationists of Islamic schools and content analysis of writings of Al-Ghazali are as following:

### **8.1 Primary aims**

With regards to the five selected interviewees, one common aspect was that their main educational aim was related to spiritual and moral side and not merely to the achievement of materialistic benefits. None of them formulated wealth, power or fame as the direct aim of education. For Maryam, the main aim was to develop realization that human beings are “the vicegerents of Allah Almighty” and that “they have to perform their duties accordingly”, by understanding their role in the society. That role she pointed was “to establish the religion of Allah Almighty in themselves and in their surroundings.” Kamran envisioned his school to be a platform “to invite people towards religion”. Thus, education should enable students to review themselves and understand and identify what they can do, and then “select their role and responsibilities”. Atif’s school’s vision was that education should be “value based” and should result in “a Muslim society where Islamic values and principles prevail.” Within character building, Kashif considered developing “honesty is most important aim.”

Al-Ghazali linked the main aim of education with the purpose of life, which is salvation in the life hereafter.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, for him the main aim of education is “To cultivate man so that he abides by the teachings of religion and is hence assured of salvation and happiness in the eternal life hereafter”.<sup>38</sup> However, Al-Ghazali considered education as a supporting tool that would be used to purify the hearts, as he thinks that true knowledge is a light, which is transformed to the hearts once they are purified.<sup>39</sup> This knowledge enables a person to abide the teachings of religion.<sup>40</sup> The respondents considered education as a science in itself, which will produce the desired aims, if it is applied to the students.

## 8.2 Other Aims

Based on the answers of respondents discussed in the preceding section, the following main themes were extracted as ‘other aims’ of education from the Islamic perspective:

1. Building character and personality with Islamic values
2. Seeking knowledge with reference to *the Holy Qur’ān*
3. Improving quality of citizenship
4. Removing or reducing dichotomy in education system

### 8.2.1 Building Character and Personality with Islamic values.

According to the respondents, one of the aims was establishing an institute which could focus on character building. Rehan also referred to *Haḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi*

wa 'alā Ālihi wa Ashābihi wa Sallam, who said that 'he has been sent as a preacher of the religion' and in another place, the Prophet *Sal Allāh-u-'*alaīhe wa sallam said that 'he has been sent for character building.' Rehan asserted that "Education should give enough information to enable students to follow *dīn* (religion); as well as *dunya* (worldly matters)" and "correction of one's attitude and personality". Within character building, Kashif considered developing "honesty as the most important aim". He also highlighted the role of education that "If education cannot change a human internally, we think that education is incomplete." Apart from developing ethics, this also includes developing critical thinking as highlighted by Maryam, and that results in a generation, which is good in ethics as well as intelligence.

Al-Ghazali also concentrates on the significance of character building in childhood. A good upbringing will give youngsters a good character and help them to carry on with an honourable life. On the other hand, a bad upbringing will ruin their character and it would be hard to redevelop it.<sup>41</sup> The education of character and the moral values is the main subject in Al-Ghazali's works, interlaced with the advancement of knowledge and comprehension. He asserts that enabling youngsters' ethical advancement is one of the fundamental objectives of education.<sup>42</sup>

### **8.2.2 Seeking knowledge with reference to the *Holy Qur'ān***

Seeking knowledge was a very commonly quoted aim of education and respondents connected this with *the Holy Qur'ān* in one way or the other. The vision of Kashif's school was to be an institution that would make *the Holy Qur'ān* easier not only to read, but also to understand as well, and in order to achieve this he commented that "Specific people and special schools were required." His main motive was to change this and make it easier for people to learn and read *the Holy Qur'ān*. For Rehan, "Giving enough information that students are able to follow religion and as well as the worldly matters" was his priority. For Maryam, "The first thing is knowledge". She also clarified that "Whether we are studying science or any other subject, we are actually studying the creation of Allah Almighty." Maryam thinks that there should be no segregation in knowledge and states that "There is no separation, there is one knowledge, and the source of knowledge is Allah Almighty. He is the Creator and whatever we are studying is coming from Him."

Al-Ghazali views it in a different way. For him, true knowledge is not simply accumulation of facts and memorizing them, but rather "It stands for a light, which shines in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of its blameworthy qualities. Through this light is revealed the truth of several things, whose names have hitherto often been heard".<sup>43</sup> Al-Ghazali accordingly insisted on illuminating the heart by removing

evils (bad habits), as the result of which knowledge will be revealed in such purified hearts.<sup>44</sup>

### 8.2.3 Improving quality of Citizenship

Atif's main target was developing 'useful citizens' for the Muslim society. Apart from this, Atif's school also aimed at increasing literacy in poor areas, as he believed without literacy, one cannot give even the Islamic education. Accordingly, his school took an initiative to increase accessibility of students to schools. They gave more importance to establishing schools in such areas where poverty was more and children did not have the resources. Yet, another aim was to give education to intellectually disabled children. Further, Atif asserted that "If we do not create a bond and relationship between our religion and our children, worldly education was worthless" and that "we cannot say we want to produce useful citizens of a Muslim society."

Al-Ghazali connected this aim with the *Shari'ah*'s requirement. He emphasized that besides developing one's own self, people are entrusted with certain responsibilities towards developing the society in which they live, which are also obligatory, but jointly with other members of the society (*Fard-e-Kifayah*).<sup>45</sup> He gave the example of getting education in the field of medicine, which is to contribute towards society in the field of health and medicine. As the doctors will assist in keeping Muslims in good health, thereby enabling them to worship and fulfil other responsibilities in a better position.<sup>46</sup>

### 8.2.4 Removing or reducing dichotomy in education system

Rehan's aim of establishing an educational institution was to serve as a link between the madrasah and the public school systems. He highlighted the fact that this dichotomy did not exist before British invasion of the Sub-continent. The vision of the Maryam's school was to be a 'Model Islamic School' where Islamic values were taught, by keeping the basic school structure intact. Kashif aimed at minimizing differences of behaviour and habits of students at conventional schools and *Madaris* as he mentioned that "The behaviour and habits of the children who belong to an Islamic educational institute and the children of modern educational institutes are different, but we have tried to minimize this difference." Hence, Kashif's aim included providing both kind of education under one roof in the name of an Islamic school and "We have tried our level best to make people understand the *Holy Qur'an* and its teachings."

This scenario was not present in Al-Ghazali's era. Although, the concept of institutional education was introduced in his era, but there was no such dichotomy of religious education and modern education.

## **9. Planned Objectives**

Based on the data analysis of responses of the interviewees and the content review of Al-Ghazali's work, the following main themes were derived from the objectives conceived and drawn by the educators and Al-Ghazali:

1. Conformance or deviation from conventional school system
2. Integration of *the Holy Qur'ān*
3. Structuring curriculum and developing books
4. Parent centric strategies
5. Teacher centric strategies
6. Student centric strategies
7. Other objectives

### **9.1 Conformance or Deviation from Conventional School System**

Among the sample schools, there were schools which had no problem in conformance with the contemporary schooling operational structure; however, others were critical of the schooling structure itself. Rehan expressed that his school's objectives include imparting worldly education along with religious education. In doing so his school introduced practices like wearing uniform, and school curriculum as far as it did not conflict with Islamic values. They also charged a reasonable fee in order to remove perceptions of being tagged as charity institution and to attract upper economic class and to meet the running expenses. Kashif runs about 550 schools, which are operationally closer to conventional schools, and he calls this as his 'Business Model' in order to sustain expenses and to provide quality education. His school prescribes specifically designed books developed and published by an Islamic organization. Atif believes that literacy is a must for understanding religious education. He opined that "If a student knows how to read and write than only you can tell him what you want to say." Accordingly, his basic strategy is integration of Islamic values in the existing system. He stated, "Instead of making complete changes, we find ways to integrate Islamic values and Islamic teachings."

No such objectives were conceived by Al-Ghazali, as the structure of modern-day school did not exist during his period.

### 9.2 Integration of the *Holy Qur'ān*

The sample schools have integrated *the Holy Qur'ān* and its teachings in their curriculum, which ranges from memorization to practically imparting the Holy Quranic teachings to their students and as such have a greater thrust of the Holy Quranic teachings in their educational process. In Maryam's school, there are regular *Holy Qur'ān* classes in which students used to recite one Surah every month and they learn it by heart. In addition to this, they also conduct weekly session to teach their teachers how to integrate the *Holy Qur'ān* in all subjects. Rehan claimed that the foundation of their school was based on the principle that whatever education given in their schools will be derived from the *Holy Qur'ān*. Their strategy also included memorizing the whole the *Holy Qur'ān* by heart, as they thought that "There is no other education which is more important than the *Holy Qur'ān*, whether it is in our schools or colleges or any other educational institution."

For Al-Ghazali, the *Holy Qur'ān* was itself the main source of all curricula. He considered knowledge of Allah Almighty, His books, His prophets, the kingdoms of earth and heaven, as well as knowledge of *Shari'ah* as interpreted by the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaie wa sallam*) as the true knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Such knowledge also includes the study of certain worldly phenomena such as medicine, arithmetic, etc., which he classed as techniques. True knowledge can only be unveiled once the self has been cultivated through knowledge and application of the Holy Quranic teachings.<sup>48</sup>

### 9.3 Structuring Curriculum and Books Development

Most of the respondents' school's curriculum came from the requirements of the exam boards to which the schools were affiliated. Both Maryam and Kamran's schools prepared the students for appearing in the board exams; however, till class eight they did not follow the board curriculum. Rehan's school used internally published books, especially designed for children, who had spent time in *hifz* of the *Holy Qur'ān*. Kamran's school aimed at removing examination system; however, in Grade 9 and 10 they prepare students for board examination. Kamran's school had designed some books internally, but the parents were given an option not to use these books. Atif's school had also compiled small booklets on various subjects along with teacher's guide. These were taught up to grade 10.

Al-Ghazali did not differentiate the aim of education from the aim of the human life.<sup>49</sup> He categorised the curriculum into *Fard-e- 'Ain*

and *Fard-e-Kifayah*, relating these to the purpose of life. By *Fard-e-'Ain* he focused on the developmental behaviour aspects of an individual student, while *Fard-e-Kifayah* relates to the benefits of the whole society. He also prioritised the knowledge accordingly and kept the *Holy Qur'an* at a superior level followed by *Sunnah*, *Tafasir* and then by other sciences.<sup>50</sup> He did not prescribe the quantity of the curriculum and points out that it depends on individuals as to how much they can grasp. Apart from contents of the curriculum, Al-Ghazali also considers the role of environment and children's learning psychology as significant.<sup>51</sup>

#### **9.4 Parent Centric Strategies**

All the respondents agreed regarding the importance of parents in the education process and as such, training and awareness sessions should be conducted for parents in one form or the other. Highlighting the role of parents in education process, Kamran asserted that "We also train the parents of our students.... a child comes to us for only five hours, but they spend all their life with their parents." Kamran believes that parents are the best *Murabbi* for school going children. Accordingly, he said "We try to teach the parents how they can prove to be good *Murabbi* for their children." Rehan's school conducted monthly meetings with the parents in which they tried to address their (parents') problems and share student issues. Apart from this, Rehan's school regularly provided feed back to the parent through report cards.

Al-Ghazali also considered the role of parents significant. He pointed out that a child is mostly influenced by his parents. Accordingly, Al-Ghazali emphasised the responsibility of parents to develop all aspects of child's initial education, from language and cultural traditions to religious and moral beliefs and practices.<sup>52</sup>

#### **9.5 Teacher Centric Strategies**

All five schools selected for the present study focused mainly on teachers as they considered them their critical success factor. Maryam asserted that teacher training is the first thing which will help in achieving the aims of her school. She opines that contemporary teachers themselves are product of secular education and as such they are confused. In order to minimize distraction of fashion, the teachers too are prescribed a uniform. They have coordinator system, whereby when new teachers come, the coordinators are assigned tasks to guide them. Kashif sees such challenges in male teachers as compared to female teachers and as such, the male teachers are provided with special sessions on Islamic education. For Kamran, his objectives can only be achieved if he has staff who is *Murabbi*.

Similarly, Al-Ghazali emphasised the role and impact of teachers as pivotal. He was of the opinion that the rights of the teachers are more than the parents.<sup>53</sup> Al-Ghazali reminded that the parents affect child's present existence in this mortal life, whereas the teachers have an impact on children's immortal life. Unlike the selected schools, Al-Ghazali saw teachers as a complete school in and of themselves. He opined that the teachers were not subject to the regulations of the schools with regards to curriculum and believed that it is teacher's responsibility to determine the quantity of curriculum for each student distinctly.<sup>54</sup>

### **9.6 Student Centric Strategies**

Maryam's considered ranking of students in the educational endeavours as inappropriate. She said, "Declaring students as position holders is not appropriate for us." Rehan highlighted that the basic idea behind his school's planning is that they believed in progressive learning. He said, "In the beginning, basic things should be informed to them and then advanced matters should be explained." Rehan also asserted that "The ability of the child's IQ should be kept in view and from the very beginning Islamic education should be imparted to the child." Kashif asserted the importance of discipline, but he confessed that "Everything cannot be achieved by discipline, there are some things which kids want to do on their own-out of the class environment."

On the other hand, Al-Ghazali considered student's own efforts and behaviour as important as teachers and parents. Accordingly, he emphasized his guidance in the form of ten codes of ethics for students, which cover details from behaviour to their responsibilities towards the society.<sup>55</sup> According to Al-Ghazali, student life continues till the grave.<sup>56</sup>

## **10. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **10.1 Conclusion**

Based on the research findings as discussed above, it can be concluded that there is a substantial identically between perceived aims of education adopted by Islamic schools and those as guided by *the Holy Qur'ān* and articulated by Al-Ghazali. These aims fundamentally relate to the achievement of non-worldly goals such as closeness to Allah Almighty or success in hereafter. However, the planned objectives of educational interventions and educational structure of the Islamic schools are basically adopted from the Western framework of education. These schools lack a holistic vision or goal of education for preparing and nurturing a child as per Islamic wisdom. The focus of Islamic schools is basically on the development of professionals possessing Islamic values. The attempts of these schools are fundamentally for alignment of their schools with the contemporary schooling system. Similarly, science

books lack to develop an awe of Allah Almighty, whereas, *the Holy Qur'ān* uses scientific phenomena for inculcating the awe of the Creator. No planned emphasis was observed on transforming the existing pedagogy as per Islamic teachings, except for one school, which planned to explore the Islamic teachings with regards to pedagogy. These schools claimed success based on indicators of increase in students' strength and popularity; however, these schools had no clear idea as to what will amount to educational success from Islamic perspective.

It can also be concluded that the Islamic schools follow the Western factory model of schooling like other conventional schools in Pakistan. The Western education system essentially prepares human resource for the state's economic requirements.<sup>57</sup> This is being critiqued by many Western intellectuals for its ineptness to cater to the creativity and natural learning aptitude of children.<sup>58</sup> This system of education in the form and structure of school was introduced to the society only two hundred years ago.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the principles of Islamic education were formulated and explained fourteen hundred years ago. The Islamic education system of that time soon witnessed an emerging empire, which not only proved the advancement in theology, but also reached the heights of scientific inventions. Many of those inventions form the basis of modern-day scientific wonders.

## 10.2 Recommendations

Following are the recommendations based on the discussion on findings from this research:

- In defining the aims and objectives of education from Islamic perspective, first of all we have to remove two important confusions prevalent in our society.
  - First is the paradox of the term education. We have to clearly define it as a process of unfolding the human potential that the Creator has created in him, and not 'programming', which is based on a set of predefined objectives or curriculum. In this definition, we should also clearly keep the art of earning 'economic well-being' separate from education, as this art is basically vocational training.
  - The second confusion is the 'world view'. We will remain in a state of confusion if we are designing an Islamic system wearing Western secular glasses. We have to see things the way Allah Almighty wants us to see, that is, through the Holy Quranic perspective. The fundamental principle of which is that Muslims are distinct nation with distinct aim of life (Iqbal 2011).

- Muslims of today's world need to rethink on the aims and objectives of the Islamic education. Whether the existing objectives of education, which are adopted from the West will serve the purpose of imparting education based on the Holy Quranic principles. Hence, it is strongly recommended that further research should be conducted to develop a model of education that is in alignment with the guidance given in *the Holy Qur'an*.

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