

INSIDE THE EDUCATORS' MINDS: A FIELD STUDY ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF EDUCATION

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21867363>

Keywords

Educational beliefs, Philosophical roots, Idealism, Pragmatism, Islamic Thought, Urban schools, Sindh, Qualitative research, Teacher education

Article History

Received: 11 September 2025

Accepted: 21 October 2025

Published: 02 November 2025

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Abstract

This qualitative field study delves into the educational beliefs of teachers within the urban schools in Sindh, Pakistan, tracing their philosophical origins back to Idealism, Pragmatism, and Islamic Thought. The study was conducted based on the phenomenological and interpretive research paradigm by collecting rich and contextual data through semi-structured interviews with 15 experienced teachers and analysis of school documents related to the study. It has been found that there is a complex relationship between traditional, modern and faith-based pedagogical orientations. Though many teachers adopted more idealist principles, with attention to character development and moral instruction and the transmission of eternal truths, a strong pragmatic influence was found in their attention to problem-solving, experiential learning, and preparing students for real-world challenges. Islamic philosophical concepts were profoundly influential in shaping pedagogical strategies and classroom management, especially those focused on the comprehensive development of students and the aim of acquiring knowledge for the sake of Allah SWT. This study shows the syncretic nature of educational beliefs in this context, as well as the need for teacher training programmes that recognise and develop these different philosophical traditions to create more coherent and effective teaching practice.

1. Introduction

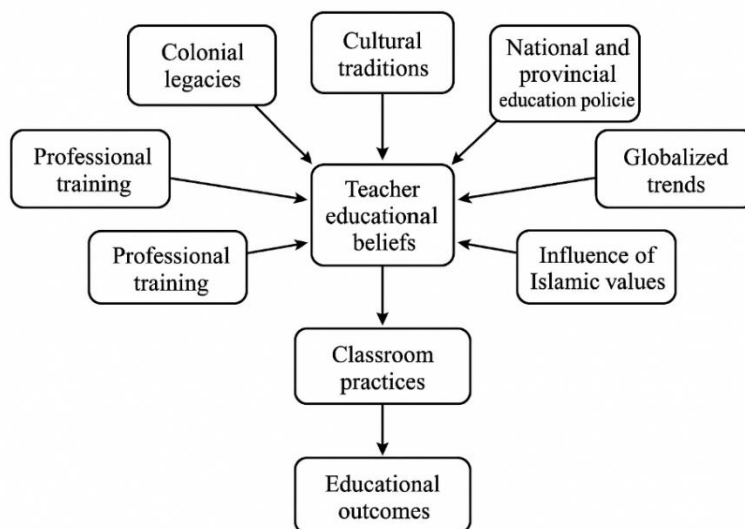
1.1 Background of the Study

The assumptions and convictions that underpin education are knowledge, learning, the learner, and the purpose of education (Beatty, et. al., 2009; Brameld, 1956; Dewey, 1916; Ozmon, & Craver, 2012; Phillips, 2003; Winch, 2012). Such deeply entrenched, usually non-verbalized beliefs constitute a teacher's educational beliefs, which have a strong impact on the classroom practices, interpretation of the curriculum, and teacher-student interactions (Aslan, 2018; Aybek, & Aslan, 2017; Baş, 2015; Pajares, 1992). It is important to understand these beliefs in order to improve the effectiveness of teaching, to design appropriate teacher education programs and finally, to improve educational results. The

education system of Pakistan is a rich mix of all historical influences, cultural traditions and contemporary reform (Ali & Zaki, 2019). The education systems have been influenced by colonialism, native teaching methods, and the culture of Islam, which have collectively created the dominant educational philosophies (Ali, 2018; Ali & Habib, 2025). In spite of this rich background, there is little systematic investigation of the nature of these various influences in the educational beliefs of practising teachers, especially in the urban context (Khan, & Li, 2022). In urban schools in Sindh, where diverse groups of students are educated, there is often a complex interplay between the traditional expectations and perceptions of the students and the globalised educational trends, and the local socio-cultural

realities. This is a dynamic space in which the philosophical basis of teachers' beliefs can be explored.

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Teachers' Educational Beliefs in Sindh



1.2 Problem Statement

Although a vast amount of literature is available on global educational philosophies, and some studies have addressed teacher beliefs in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2011; Khan, & Li, 2022; Mahmood, 2019), there is a specific gap in the literature in exploring the relationship between the stated and observed educational beliefs of teachers with specific educational philosophies, namely Idealism, Pragmatism, and Islamic thought in the context of schools in urban Sindh. Educational reforms and policy directives have been introduced in Pakistan top-down which have not been grounded in the understanding of the belief system of the educators on the ground (Khan, & Li, 2022). Teachers' resistance, superficial implementation, and the failure of educational initiatives are possible outcomes of the mismatch between policy expectations and teachers' deeply ingrained beliefs (Silvernalli, 1992; Skott, 2015; Taylor et al., 2001; Usul et al., 2025). Hence, if there is no awareness of the philosophical basis of teachers' beliefs, efforts to improve the quality of education can be limited and ineffective (Gezer, 2018; Hamurcu, & Altuncu, 2023). The purpose of the present study is to fill this gap by examining

teachers' beliefs, the reasons for their beliefs, and the philosophical underpinning of their beliefs.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the educational beliefs of teachers in urban schools of Sindh, and how can these beliefs be understood through the lenses of Idealism, Pragmatism, and Islamic Thought?

To address this primary question, the following sub-questions will be explored:

1. What are the prominent educational beliefs held by teachers concerning the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, the nature of the learner, and effective pedagogical practices?

2. To what extent do these beliefs reflect tenets of Idealism, such as an emphasis on eternal truths, traditional values, and classical knowledge?

3. How do these beliefs align with principles of Pragmatism, including a focus on experience, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge?

4. In what ways are these beliefs informed by Islamic Thought, particularly regarding holistic

development, moral uprightness, and the pursuit of knowledge as a spiritual endeavor?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have theoretical and practical implications. Ideally, it is a part of the larger conversation about educational philosophy by providing empirical detail of the ways in which philosophical concepts are expressed in the daily practices and beliefs of teachers in a particular non-Western setting. It helps to better understand the syncretism of educational thought, where education is influenced by several philosophical positions and where the coexistence of these positions is possible. In practice, the results can be useful for the policy makers, curriculum developers and teacher educators of Sindh and Pakistan. A distinction between the predominant philosophical positions of teachers can help to design professional development programs to strengthen practices that are grounded in sound philosophies, or to fill in gaps and offer alternative philosophies in a culturally appropriate way. To promote ownership of reforms and a solid basis for educational initiatives, it is essential to understand teachers' beliefs. Moreover, the study can help to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the role of indigenous and religious philosophies in educational thinking that transcends Western-based systems of thought.

2. Literature Review

Teacher beliefs about education are an important topic of study and are the implicit structure that influences teachers' approaches to teaching. The section summarizes some of the major concepts related to educational beliefs, reviews some of the

major tenets of Idealism, Pragmatism and Islamic Thought in education, and reviews literature on teacher beliefs with a focus on those that were relevant to Pakistan.

2.1 Educational Beliefs: Definition and Influence

There are five ways of knowing, according to a seminal work by Hessong and Weeks (1991): (a) revelation from God; (b) authority from an expert; (c) the individual's reasoning; (d) the individual's sensory perception; and (e) the individual's intuition. Educational beliefs are "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Pajares, 1992, p. 326). These beliefs are influenced by experiences, professional training, cultural norms and societal expectations (Silvernalli, 1992; Skott, 2015; Usul et al., 2025). They may be deeply hidden, entrenched, and difficult to change, but they have a significant impact on teachers' classroom management practices, assessment methods, student-teacher relationships, and teaching approaches (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Taylor et al., 2001). Understanding these beliefs is essential as they shape how teachers see new information, how they enact change, and how they build their professional identities.

2.2 Philosophical Foundations of Education

Philosophy provides a unique lens for understanding the purpose, content, and process of education (Beatty, et. al., 2009; Brameld, 1956; Dewey, 1916). The focus of this research is Idealism, Pragmatism, and Islamic Thought traditions.

Table 1: Key Tenets of Educational Philosophies

Philosophical Tradition	Purpose of Education	Role of the Teacher	Nature of the Learner	Curriculum Focus	Pedagogy
Idealism	Develop mind, character, spiritual nature; pursue eternal truths.	Moral & intellectual guide; transmits heritage.	Spiritual, rational being; capable of abstract thought.	Humanities, arts, literature, philosophy, mathematics; moral/character education.	Socratic dialogue, lectures, discussions, introspection.

Pragmatism	Prepare for changing world; problem-solving; social progress.	Facilitator of experiences; guides inquiry.	Active, curious, social being; learns by doing.	Relevant to real-life; sciences, social studies, vocational skills; problem-based.	Project-based, hands-on, experimentation, group work, democratic classroom practices.
Islamic Thought	Cultivate holistic personality (insan kamil); spiritual development; serve humanity.	Murabbi, mu'allim, mu'addib; imparts knowledge, instills values, models character.	Possesses fitra & aqal; responsible for actions.	Naqli (revealed) & aqli (rational) knowledge; Akhlaq, ethics, social responsibility.	Tafakkur, tadabbur, tazakkur, dialogue, memorization (sacred texts), practical application (amal).

2.2.1 Idealism in Education

One of the oldest philosophical traditions, idealism sees the world as being mental or spiritual in nature and believes that knowledge is gained mainly through ideas, reason and introspection, not through sensory experience. In education, Idealism focuses on the development of the individual's mind, character and spiritual nature, the search for universal and eternal truths, and the realization of one's full human potential (Ozmon & Craver, 2012). The teacher's role is to be a moral and intellectual guide, inspiring students to aspire higher, to transmit cultural heritage and to help them find the truth that is within them, embody ideals and create a stimulating environment for intellectual growth. The learner is considered to be a spiritual and rational person who can think abstractly and make moral judgments and learn by recalling and relating to universal ideas. The curriculum is based on the humanities, arts, literature, philosophy and mathematics, which develop the intellect, the moral life and the sense of beauty and truth, and moral and character education is at its heart. Learning techniques involve discussion, introspection, lectures and Socratic dialogue, which encourages critical thinking and moral deliberation.

2.2.2 Pragmatism in Education

Pragmatism, a late 19th-century movement, is the opposite of Idealism, which holds that reality is constantly changing and is perceived through

interaction with the environment. Knowledge is not objective, but is developed as a result of experience and verified by its applications. The following are key tenets in education: that education is a preparation for life, and not life itself; that the purpose of education is to prepare people to solve problems, to adapt to new situations, and to contribute to the social progress (Dewey, 1916). Teachers are facilitators of learning, making learning meaningful, guiding inquiry, and encouraging collaboration and problem solving, and not just a provider of information. Everyone is a learner who is active, curious, social, learns by doing and experiencing, and understands learning as an active process of making meaning through interaction with the environment. Content is relevant to the real world and the needs of society, is often interdisciplinary, and focuses on science, social studies, vocational skills, problem-based learning. Pedagogy is based on project based learning, hands on activities, experimenting, group learning, and democratic learning practices that involve critical thinking and application of learning.

2.2.3 Islamic Thought in Education

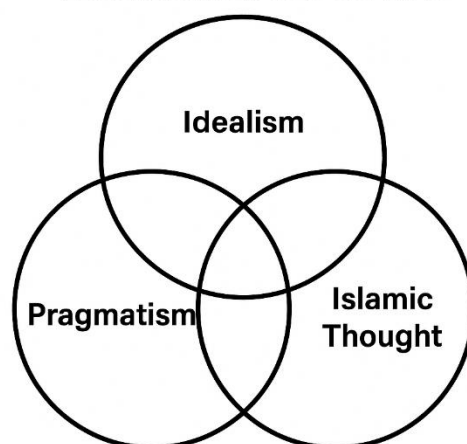
Islamic Thought is a complete philosophy of education based on the Quran and Sunnah (Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H.) traditions). It considers education as a continuous process, which is a part of a person's spiritual, intellectual and moral growth and should lead to success in this world and the hereafter (Al-Attas, 1980). The

aim of education is the development of a whole person (insan kamil) covering the intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical aspects. The ultimate purpose is to know Allah's creation, live according to His right, and serve humanity (khilafah). The pursuit of knowledge (ilm) is done for the sake of Allah and the use of it is for the betterment of the society (Sardar, 1985). A teacher is a murabbi (nurturer), mu'allim (instructor), mu'addib (disciplinarian/educator), who bears great responsibility and is respected for his piety and knowledge, giving knowledge, instilling values and modeling exemplary character in the students, and guiding them towards spiritual enlightenment. The learner has the innate disposition towards

good (fitra) and an intellect (aqal) to receive and process knowledge, and is accountable for what he does, and learning is a means of purifying the self and coming closer to Allah. The curriculum includes naqli (revealed) and aqli (rational) knowledge, the former being complementary with the latter, and the main content is moral science (Akhlaq), ethics and social responsibility. Pedagogy focuses on tafakkur (reflection), tadabbur (contemplation), tazakkur (remembrance), dialogue, memorization (particularly of sacred texts), and the application of knowledge to action (amal) that create a learning atmosphere that promotes respect, discipline and community.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Intersecting Educational Philosophies

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERSECTING
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES**



2.3 Empirical Studies on Teacher Beliefs in Pakistan and Beyond

In Pakistan, traditional teacher-centred approaches are observed in the research on teacher beliefs, which is attributed to the cultural norms and large class sizes in the country (Khan, Muhammad, & Bashir, 2011; Khan, & Li, 2022; Mahmood, 2019). Research has shown that many teachers focus on content and memorization instead of critical thinking or student centered approaches, partly because of the pressure to teach the syllabus and secure good examination grades (Khan et al., 2011). Yet there are other studies that suggest that constructivist principles are becoming

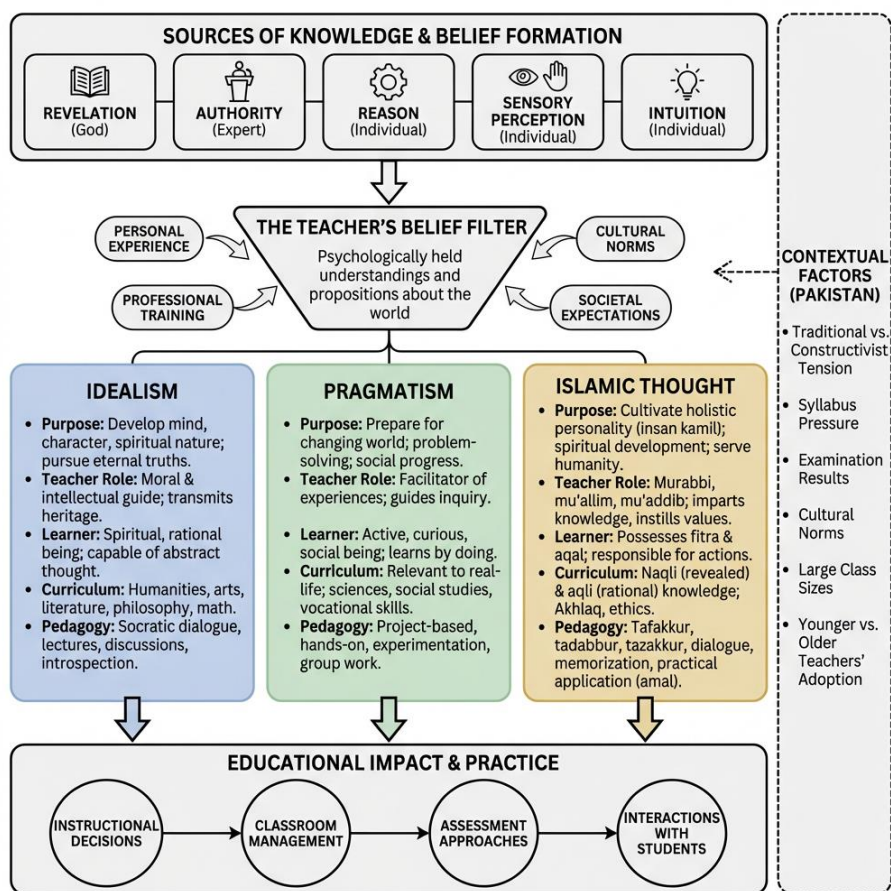
more prevalent and accepted, especially for younger or better trained teachers (Ali, 2016).

In the international literature, there has been a consistent finding that teachers' beliefs relate to their classroom practices (Hativa and Goodyear, 2002; Ilhan et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2002; Levin and Waldman, 2005). For instance, a teacher who is optimistic about the good in every child (idealistic view) will be more likely to have a nurturing and supportive pedagogy. On the other hand, a teacher who has a pragmatic approach to learning, believes that knowledge must be gained through experience and problem-solving, will create more experiential learning activities.

Teachers' philosophy, whether stated or unstated, influences their decisions about teaching and learning, and determines the quality of the learning environment (Livingston et al., 1995; Nespor, 1987; Silvernalli, 1992). Previous studies have dealt with certain aspects of teachers' beliefs and educational philosophy but few studies have directly explored the philosophical basis rooted in

Idealism, Pragmatism and Islamic thought of the teachers' beliefs in one local context, such as urban Sindh (Khan et al., 2011; Mahmood, 2019). This study seeks to address this particular empirical and conceptual void, to provide a more nuanced picture of the complicated ideologies informing educational practice.

Figure 3: Illustration of Knowledge Sources and the Teacher's Belief Filter (Literature Review)



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm and Approach

In this study, a qualitative research paradigm and the interpretive and phenomenological approach was used along with the philosophical approach. The paradigm is best for examining the subjective meanings, experiences, and beliefs of people in their natural context (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenological approach is a way to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers

in relation to their beliefs about education, and the interpretive lens is a way to analyze how teachers' beliefs are formed and shaped by their socio-cultural and philosophical context (Hatch, 2002). The philosophical inquiry component is the analysis of the expressed beliefs and practices against the established philosophical traditions (Idealism, Pragmatism and Islamic Thought), in order to identify the philosophical roots. These three traditions were selected because they have a

strong tradition of orientation to traditional, modern and faith-based roots.

3.2 Research Design

The study design was a field study with direct contact with the target population in their natural school environment. This design allowed for the gathering of comprehensive and meaningful contextual data that accurately reflects the nuances of teachers' beliefs and their manifestations in practice.

3.3 Participants

The study focused on experienced teachers working in urban school settings across Sindh, Pakistan. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling strategy for individuals who were likely to have developed clear and coherent

educational beliefs as a result of their years of experience and engagement in a variety of school activities. The number of 15 teachers was large enough to explore in-depth without causing the study to become unwieldy for the purposes of thematic saturation (Guest et al., 2006), and was of a size that was commonly recommended for qualitative phenomenological studies. The selection was based on the following criteria: the participants must have at least 5 years of teaching experience in urban schools of Sindh and currently working as a teacher in primary, secondary, and higher secondary schools. They also had to be ready to engage in in-depth interviews and to represent a variety of subjects (e.g., Science, History, Islamic Studies) in order to include a wide variety of pedagogical orientations.

Table 2: Interview Participant Demographics

Participant ID	Teaching Level	Subject(s) Taught	Years of Experience (in urban Sindh schools)	Gender
Teacher A	Secondary	Science (Physics, Chemistry)	12	Male
Teacher B	Secondary	Science	8	Female
Teacher C	Secondary	Mathematics	15	Male
Teacher D	Higher Secondary	History	18	Female
Teacher E	Secondary	Urdu Literature	10	Female
Teacher F	Secondary	English Language & Literature	14	Female
Teacher G	Higher Secondary	Urdu & Islamic Studies	20	Male
Teacher H	Primary	Arts & Craft	7	Female
Teacher I	Secondary	Social Studies (Geography, Civics)	11	Male
Teacher J	Primary	All subjects (Generalist)	6	Female
Teacher K	Higher Secondary	Islamic Studies	9	Male
Teacher L	Secondary	Social Studies (History, Economics)	16	Male
Teacher M	Primary	All subjects (Generalist)	13	Female
Teacher N	Secondary	Science (Biology)	5	Female

Teacher O	Higher Secondary	Business Studies	7	Male
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3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interview and document analysis were used as two main data collection tools. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain in-depth information about teachers' educational beliefs relating to the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, the nature of the learner, curriculum, assessment and effective pedagogical practices. A flexible interview guide was used to elicit probing follow-up questions, which helped to ensure a complete picture of the participants' thoughts. The questions were open-ended to elicit lengthy narratives. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewees, and each lasted 45-60 minutes, with the length dependent on the interviewee's availability.

Document analysis was used to corroborate and to provide context for the data collected through interviews by analyzing official documents from the school that could indicate institutional philosophies or perhaps implicitly influence teacher practices. Analyzed documents included school mission statements, school policy documents pertaining to teaching and learning, school policy documents pertaining to student conduct, curriculum guidelines (if school specific) and teacher handbooks or professional development documents. The documents were examined to detect the explicit or implicit statements that are consistent with Idealist, Pragmatist or Islamic philosophical principles. A document analysis checklist was used to guide this process.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on a qualitative approach, mainly using thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2020, 2021) and complemented by a comparative philosophical approach. The process of familiarization included repeated readings of transcribed interviews and notes from documents to develop a deep understanding of the data. This was followed by preliminary coding of data

segments (phrases, sentences, paragraphs) that were given initial codes that expressed the meaning of the segment as it related to the educational beliefs. These similar codes were then clustered to create more general overarching themes concerning teachers' beliefs, which were then compared to the total data to check for consistency, accuracy, and distinctiveness. Each theme was provided with clear and concise names and definitions and with quotes to illustrate the theme. Importantly, for each identified theme and sub-theme, it was then examined in the context of Idealism, Pragmatism and Islamic thought. This included explicit or implicit alignment of teachers' beliefs with the core tenets of each philosophy, comparing and contrasting beliefs to see if one philosophy was more prominent, or if there was a blending, and finding examples where beliefs contradicted or nuanced a particular philosophical stance. Triangulation of data was used by comparing findings from interviews and document analysis to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Written informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits was obtained. All data collected were treated with anonymity (using pseudonyms) and with confidentiality (no penalty for not participating and for withdrawing at any time); data was stored in a secure manner and was only accessible to the research team. Ensuring the study contributes positively to knowledge and does no harm to participants, necessary ethical approval was sought and obtained from relevant institutional ethics committee, before commencing data collection.

3.7 Limitations

There are limitations to this study although it sought to gain a comprehensive understanding. The study is restricted to urban schools of Sindh and may not be directly applicable in rural and other regional settings. Qualitative research is also

interpretive, which means that findings are open to the interpretation of the researcher. Furthermore, the study was based on interviews and document analysis, and may reflect teachers' stated beliefs and self-reported practices, rather than observed classroom practices; this discrepancy between stated belief and observed practice should be taken into account when interpreting the findings of this study.

4. Findings

Through thematic analysis of the interviews data with the help of document analysis, the following salient educational beliefs were found among the teachers in urban schools of Sindh. These beliefs were frequently expressed in a complex way, sometimes in Idealist, Pragmatist and even Islamic philosophical terms. The results are summarized below with an emphasis on the philosophical links.

4.1 Purpose of Education: A Holistic Spectrum

Teachers communicated a complex vision of the purpose of education that was more than just learning for learning's sake. These three themes emerged as sub-themes: character development, preparation for life, and knowledge for spiritual growth.

A strong theme was the emphasis on education's role in shaping students' character and instilling moral values. Many teachers spoke of the ultimate aim of education as the production of "good human beings" and "responsible citizens." "The education I know is not equations in chemistry," said Teacher A, who teaches science. "It is about teaching children to be honest, respectful and disciplined. If they don't learn these reflections, what is the point?" Likewise, Teacher F, an English teacher, stated, "We need to teach them ethics, how to communicate with another person, how to be honest. These are universal values, and are more important than any subject." This is closely related to Idealism's emphasis on the culturing of mind and moral character, striving for universal ideals, and the propagation of moral values. These concepts fit very well with that of idealism, which is also concerned with the development of intellect and morality, the pursuit of universal ideals, the

transmission of moral principles. It's also very much part of Islamic Thought (Al-Attas, 1980) where *tarbiyah* (nurturing) and *ta'deeb* (disciplining/educating) is about the molding of *insan-e-kamil* (the complete human being) who has *akhlaq* (moral character) and *adab* (proper conduct). This philosophical inclination was supported by the fact that character building and moral education were repeatedly explicitly referred to in the school mission and vision statements.

In addition to character, teachers often presented education as a tool to give students practical skills and help them with problems in the real world. This instrumentalist perspective emphasized the role of learning in preparation for later life. Teacher C, mathematics, said, "The students must know how to use what they have learned. My math is not just about equations; it's about getting them to think logically to solve problems they will face in life, be it in business or at home." "We try to relate what we're teaching to the world around them, issues in the community, current events," said Teacher I, Social Studies, "They have to appreciate their societal values and add to them." These visions correspond directly with Pragmatism indicating that individuals are equipped to adapt in a dynamic world, solve problems, and apply knowledge. The concept of education as life and an emphasis on social efficiency, were present. School policy papers too cited "skill development" and "employability" as important goals.

A separate, but closely related purpose mentioned by some teachers, particularly those teaching Islamic Studies, or with a strong religious background, was the pursuit of knowledge for the purpose of spiritual growth and the development of the knowledge of Allah's creation (Al-Attas, 1980). "And then, every subject benefits you to understand the greatness of Allah, even science," said teacher K, Islamic studies. "Knowledge is *Noor* (light). We teach them how to be better Muslims, and why they're here, why they are here in the hereafter," Teacher G, an Urdu teacher, added: "Learning our sacred texts, our history, it connects us to our faith. It's not just about passing an exam, it's about nourishing their souls." This is the classical Islamic perspective that considers the acquisition of knowledge as an act of worship

and as a way of recognizing the divine signs and discharging one's khilafah (trustee-ship) on Earth (Al-Attas, 1980). Ilm is directly related to taqwa. There is further overlap with Idealism's attention to the spiritual and quest for ultimate truths.

4.2 Role of the Teacher as Authority, Facilitator, and Model

A mix of philosophical influences also emerged in teachers' opinion of their own role. Some teachers represented themselves mainly as authorities who passed on established truths and kept discipline. This view frequently emphasized teacher authority and the necessity of controlled teaching. Teacher D, a history teacher, said, "My role is to present the curriculum, to ensure they understand the background. I'm the one who's got the knowledge, and they're here to take it." Also, Teacher J, a primary teacher, said, "Discipline is important. Without it, there can be no learning. I have to be firm." This is consistent with the presentation of the teacher in Idealism, who transmits cultural heritage and truths over the ages, most commonly through the lecture and teacher-directed instruction. It also mirrors traditional pedagogic methods used in most education systems.

Some teachers made noticeable moves towards this, describing their roles as facilitators of learning experiences. Teacher B, science, said, "Try to let them discover something for themselves. I design experiments, present complex problems and accompany them on their journey of finding answers. I don't just give answers." Teacher H, an arts teacher said, "I am not there to tell them what to draw, but to support them in exploring their creativity. I give the materials and the space, and they are making." These statements resonate closely with the Pragmatist view that the teacher is a guide who provides stimulating environments and supports learning through experience and inquiry.

In keeping with the focus on the overall development of the person, a strong trend among teachers was to perceive themselves as moral exemplars and care providers who attended to the well-being of the whole learner. Teacher E, an Urdu teacher, said, "I'm an Urdu teacher and I

have to be their role model. Here, I am like a father to them. It's my job to lead them in all directions, not just academically." Teacher M, a teacher of general subjects, said, "They also need emotional support, not just academic instruction." This role of the teacher is deeply rooted in the Islamic Thought's construct of murabbi and mu'addib, and focuses on nurturing, moral guidance, and development in totality. It also stems from Idealism's emphasis on the teacher as the ideal person and guide.

4.3 Nature of the Learner: Tabula Rasa to Active Agent

Teachers' beliefs about students varied from rather passive inheritors of knowledge to active builders of their own knowledge. Some educators regarded students as essentially empty receptors to be encoded with information, with the focus being to simply memorize and recall. "They are still young and they don't really know much yet," Teacher N, a science teacher said, "My job is to pour knowledge into them." This view, though undoubtedly reductive, is related to a traditional Idealist perspective in which the teacher communicates Truths that the learner just has to take on board.

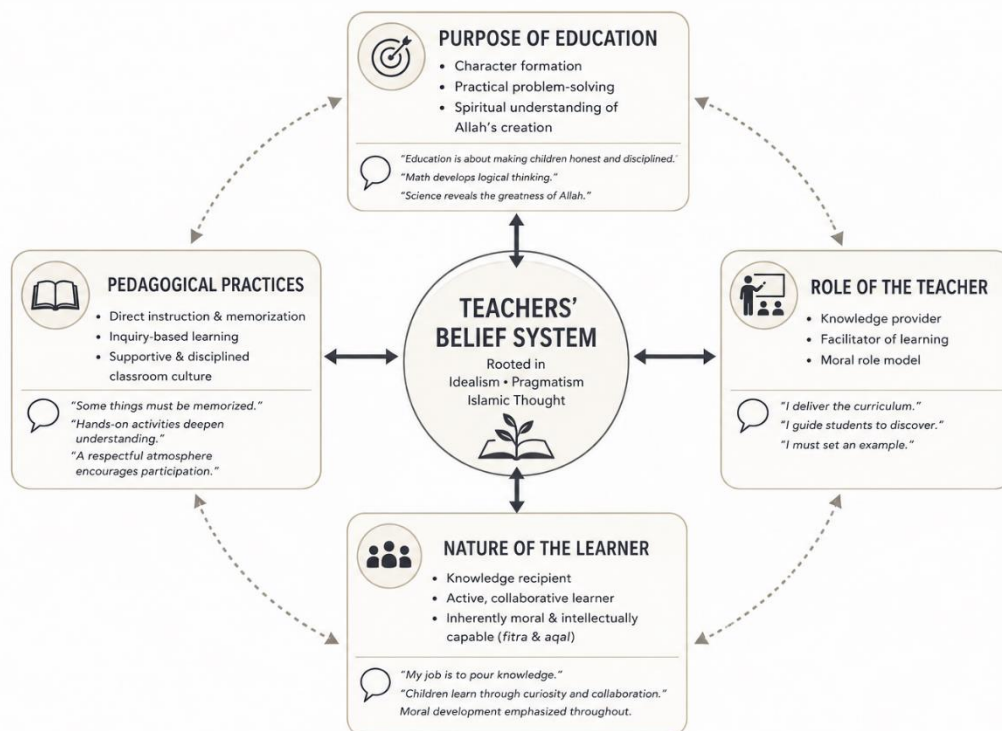
A more recent perspective regarded learners as naturally curious or even active, and able to co-construct the knowledge in interaction and collaboration. Science teacher, B, said: "Children are inquisitive. If you provide them something interesting to do, they learn more quickly. They learn best when they learn from one another." Teacher L, a social studies teacher, added, "They learn from each other. Group discussions, debates – that's how they build their understanding, not just from my lecture." These beliefs are strongly congruent with Pragmatism's view of the learner as an active, experiential, and social being who learns by doing and interacting.

Many teachers also believed in the fact that the learners are naturally pure in character (fitra) and have intellectual power (aqal), meaning they are naturally inclined to do good and have the ability to reason. It is an Islamic thought based perspective that believes that students are not passive receivers but have the potential to learn

and improve their moral and intellectual status. It suggests that the task of education is to develop and direct this natural ability. This outlook is also

consistent with the Idealism focus on the learner as a rational and spiritual person.

Figure 4: Thematic Map of Teachers' Belief System



4.4 Effective Pedagogical Practices: Blending Approaches

The teachers' beliefs about effective pedagogical practices showcased a blend of traditional, modern, and religiously informed approaches. A large number of teachers still held to the idea that direct teaching and memorization is still important, especially in teaching basic knowledge and recalling facts. The history teacher, Teacher D, said, "Some things just have to be memorized, such as dates and important events, and there is no short cut. This is in line with the Idealist and traditional pedagogical methods emphasizing the transmission of a set of known knowledge. Likewise, memorization of scriptures (e.g., Quran) is one of the main activities in Islamic education. However, lots of participants highlighted learning by doing and learning by questioning as key elements of getting away from rote learning. The mathematics teacher, Teacher C, put it like this: "I

try to give them a problem to solve where they have to figure and puzzle out what would be its answer. That's real learning." Science teacher, B, emphasized, "It's very essential that we have hands-on activities. When they see and hear an experiment, in that case, they can understand the concepts much better." Indeed, these practices closely correspond to Pragmatism's focus on learning through action, problem-solving and active manipulation of the environment.

In addition, providing a supportive and disciplined classroom environment was repeatedly emphasized as being critical to learning. It was underlined by the teachers that respect should be mutual, morals should be advocated and a sense of community should be built in the class. A setup of calm and respect is paramount," Teacher E, the Urdu teacher, said. When students believe that they are respected, they feel safe to ask and answer questions. This represents aspects of Idealist

beliefs on the development of character and a rigorous mind, as well as of Islamic emphasis on adab (manners) and akhlaq (morals) in all our dealings. The idea that the classroom is a fostering ground for all around development is very much in compatibility with Islamic philosophy of education (Ahmad, & Li, 2016).

5. Discussion

The results of this study help to grasp the subtleties of the educational belief system on the part of urban teachers of Sindh, suggesting an intricate pattern that weaved together Idealist, Pragmatist, and Islamic philosophical fibers. These ideas often exist alongside one another in what may be considered a syncretic pedagogical approach (Terzi, & Uyangör, 2017; Tupas, & Pendon, 2016). An earnest moral tone, accompanied by hard work on character building, constitutes a strong influence of both Idealists and Islamic. In form and content, teachers remained wholeheartedly focused on raising good human individuals who would be good citizens. For countless teachers, then, in Sindh, there is more to education than grades; it's about nurturing the soul.

At the same time, a strong pragmatic influence was noted, particularly concerning teachers' attention to preparing pupils for practical life and promote problem-solving skills. It represents an understanding on the influence of educators that literacy is about providing learners with transferable skills to be used in a multitude of ways in a new world which evokes John Dewey's (1938) ideas associated with experiential learning or education as preparation for life. This practical focus sometimes translated into a wish for more practical learning experiences within classrooms. The influence of Islamic Thought was so deep that it was seen in many aspects, particularly in the issue of the purpose of knowledge in spiritual development and the role of the teacher as a moral model and a trainer (murabbi and mu'addib). This represents the strong cultural and religious foundations of education in the region and the importance of gaining knowledge (ilm) and comprehending the creation of the universe and a righteous way of life (Al-Attas, 1980). The

pedagogical practices do not spell out in detail the integration of naqli (revealed) and aqli (rational) sciences, but as a consequence of this, a holistic curriculum vision is implied, which is shaped by Islamic philosophy.

For instance, the idealization of the teacher (Idealist/Traditional), a facilitator of the learning process (Pragmatist), and a moral guide (Idealist/Islamic) were very interesting. The complexity of this role suggests that teachers' negotiations between the perceived need to disseminate knowledge of the curriculum and to retain control, and to encourage student-centred learning and to be key ethical models. Likewise, there was a combination of attitudes towards the learner, from passive receptacles (Traditional/Idealist) to active problem solvers (Pragmatist) and those who have inherent abilities (fitra/aqal).

The visibility of pedagogical practices such as emphasis on direct instruction and memorization to working with experiential and inquiry-based learning, alongside maintaining positive and behaviorist teaching environment, underscore the blended philosophical orientations. In general, teachers tend to use several methods / philosophies in their teaching depending on the type of content, students' needs and the overall purpose of education as they view it (Fries, 2012; Grasha, 1996).

The findings in this study are consistent with the results of the international studies conducted, which have shown that the teachers' beliefs are related to their in-class practices (Aslan, 2018; Aybek, & Aslan, 2017; Baş, 2015; Hamurcu, & Altuncu, 2023; Kane et al., 2002; Terzi, & Uyangör, 2017; Tupas, & Pendon, 2016; Tunca et al., 2015). They also build upon the previous research in Pakistan (Ali, 2016; Khan et al., 2011; Khan, & Li, 2022; Mahmood, 2019) by explicitly connecting beliefs to specific philosophical traditions, thus giving a more detailed picture of the ideological landscape. The syncretic nature of beliefs found in urban Sindh schools implies that efforts to reform the school pedagogy should recognize and draw from these multiple foundations but not impose a uniform pedagogical structure (Ahmad, & Li, 2016).

6. Conclusion and Implications

The present research has effectively unveiled the educational conviction of the teachers of urban Sindh, Pakistan and its philosophical lineages in Idealism, Pragmatism and Islamic Thought. Results suggest that teachers at the school operate with a complex and at times syncretic set of beliefs that bring together strands of traditional and modern and faith-based ideologies. Education is understood here as a unified whole to include the formation of character and preparation for the life of this world and the life to come. As teachers, they envision themselves in several different roles: teacher, guide, and moral leader (Brookfield, 1995; Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005). Learners are identified as knowledge receptacles to as active problem-solvers with intellectual and moral capacities. Good teaching and learning is therefore a blend of didactic, experiential and disciplined and supportive learning environment.

6.1 Implications for Teacher Training

The results have great implications for the development programs for teachers in Sindh. First, programs should recognize and affirm the diversity among and of teachers' personal philosophies in, what already exists (Ali, 2011). Rather than teaching a "correct" philosophy, professional development programs can assist teachers to articulate their own philosophy, understand its practical implications, examining the relationship between their philosophy and their practice. Furthermore, teacher training can also be tailor-made in order to assist teachers in analyzing various philosophical doctrines in a coherent way. For example, workshops could take system approaches to elucidating how idealist concern for moral development can be intertwined with pragmatic problem-solving techniques, or how Islamic model of the integrated development resonates with modern constructivist pedagogies. Third, inconsistencies or conflicts with teachers' beliefs need to be resolved. If a teacher believes in active learning, but isn't using it as the main form of instruction, if he's mostly using rote memory-based instruction, then Professional Development (PD) can be used to help close that gap, or at least help him towards

full implementation, maybe by showing him something he finds really valuable. Finally, taking into account the strong Islamic influence, programs should address how modern pedagogical approaches can be successfully grounded in Islamic ethics and philosophy to cultivate culturally appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

6.2 Implications for Curriculum Design

Regarding curriculum development in Sindh, the findings point out the mismatch between the curriculum and the multiple-faceted purpose of education as perceived by the teachers. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the curriculum balances intellectual challenge with character education, practical skills and spiritual development. This could include the explicit incorporation of moral and ethical instruction into the curriculum, the creation of cross-cutting projects that apply classroom learning to global problems, and finding meaningful ways to infuse moral and social values and teachings into common experience beyond courses in religious studies (Ahmad, & Li, 2016). Curriculum developers should also understand that teachers will filter and use curriculum through their own philosophies. Therefore, providing clear guidance on pedagogical approaches that align with diverse philosophies, and offering flexibility for teachers to adapt content to their belief systems, could lead to more effective implementation and greater teacher ownership.

In summary, the understanding of the philosophical roots of teachers' beliefs is not just a theoretical exercise, but has implications for the development of a more efficient, culturally sensitive and contextually relevant education system in Sindh and beyond. By acknowledging and leveraging this rich landscape, educational interventions can help promote more consistent pedagogy and help students learn better.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Declaration of Generative AI: During the preparation of this work, the authors used Generative AI in order to assist in the generation of the figures. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed.

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