SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW ARCHIVES

EXPLORING THE MOTIVATION AND PROSPECTS OF MADRASSA STUDENT; A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract
This study examines the reasons behind students enrolling in madrassa education and the prospects of madrassa graduates. Through in-depth interviews with 20 respondents from selected areas, the research employs qualitative analysis to explore these dynamics. Findings indicate that family influence, close relative ties, and the benefits offered by madrassas, such as free accommodation, food, and education, are primary factors driving enrollment. An emotional connection to religion also plays a significant role. Graduates often pursue religious roles, such as teaching in madrassas, home tutoring, or serving as imams or muazzins. The study focuses on two institutions, Jamia Dar-ul-uloom Khairul Madaris al Arabia and Govt: Darul-ul-uloomo Islamia in Swat, with 1195 and 3800 graduates respectively. However, it notes that madrassa graduates often have limited technical and communication skills, leading to a narrow range of job opportunities primarily within madrassa settings.
Keywords: Madrassa, Islamic religious education, Swat, Pakistan

Introduction
Madrassa term has numerous meanings. Usually, it is referred to a school in Arabic language (Riaz, 2008). If we take it in religious point of view, Madrassa is a school which aims at the provision of religious education. The programs of the madrassa or Madrassa of Deen are generally regarded as sacred institutions centered on sacred doctrines, the presence of the Prophet PBUH, the Quran and the books (Munir et al., 2021). No subjects are prepared and the specifications of the text and lesson framework are also different in one school of thought to another school of thought (Fair, 2008).
AEPAM (Academy of Educational Planning and Management) has shown that 22.8 million Pakistani children are away from school (Dawan, 2019). Literacy rate of children is only 40 percent of the 70 million children whom ages are between 4 and 16 (Shami & Hussain, 2006). The inaccessibility to public schools and the small number of non-public schools leaves the people with no choice but to admit their children in madrassa institutes (Zaidi, 1999). The number of students studying in Madrasas is increasing rapidly. There were 3 million students

enrolled in madrassa education in 2004 (Andrabi, 2005). There are probably more than 24,000 registered madrasas in Pakistan other than unregistered ones and the number is still growing (Tribune, 2014).

The numbers of madrassa students have increased to a large extent in Swat (Shah, 2022). In Past few years the numbers of students joining madrassa are increasing rapidly as in 2000-2001 year 200 students use to join madrassa institutes every year according to Govt: Dar-ul-Uloom Islamia Saidu Sharif Swat but now in 2021-2022 more than 500 students enroll in madrassa education (Shah, 2022), although majority studies point out that poverty is the chief reason behind parents compulsion on their children to go to these schools, there is much that is not clear about the main reasons why parents choose these religious schools?

Similarly, the outdated curriculum and traditional teaching methods followed in Pakistani madrasas produce students who do not have the intellectual and technical skills to fit the current job markets (Dogar et. al, 2021). Differences in ethics and morals also make them part of a different social order making it even more difficult for them to enter society. Once they graduate from madrassa education, what kind of challenges do these exstudents face in entering the community both economically and socially? (Dogar et. al, 2021). So, this study explores the motivation and prospects of madrassa student by using Qualitative methodology and analyzing the collected data thought Semi-structured interview by thematic analysis.

Literature Review
The study provides the body of research on Madrassa education in Pakistan, which offers invaluable information on the motivations for enrollment, the role of the education system in social and economic development, the barriers to modern education, and the qualitative aspects of educational experience and reforms. This literature review synthesizes the major findings from different studies to provide a holistic understanding of these trending issues from the Pakistani angle.

Dogar et al., (2021) study the motivations behind student enrollment in madrassas with particular focus on the socio-economic roles of graduates from madrassas based in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Their study unveils the religious and socio-economic factors driving the families to choose madrassa education for their children, and they emphasize on the highest degree in madrassa i.e., Takhasus-fil-fiqh and its reputed value in the community (Dogar et al., 2021).

Iqbal, et al, (2023) tackle the very crucial barrier to the access of modern education by Pakistani madrassas. Through the students' and teachers' feelings who said that it exactly explained the problems about the madrassa education system which is outdated and controversial. This research highlights the need for reforms to integrate modern educational content and methodologies that will in turn improve the relevance and effectiveness of madrassa education (Iqbal et al, 2023).

Anjum (2017) makes a case for synergizing conventional education with Madrassah system by means of a study of Madaris in Lahore. This study demonstrates that there is a need for madrassas to modernize their curricula and teaching methods to prepare students for socio-economic challenges as well as for employment, as the role of the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board is viewed as that of facilitating this transition (Anjum, 2017).

Khan et al. (2016) investigate the language attitudes of students and teachers in Pakistani madrassas from a qualitative perspective. Their study investigates the consequences of these perceptions for the quality of education in madrassas, uncovering language as a barrier to learning and recommending the development of linguistic reforms which allow students to engage in education and job opportunities beyond the confines of their religious school (Khan et al., 2016).

Through their explorations, Rabbi and Habib (2019) broaden the discourse on madrassa education reform in Pakistan by probing the challenges to accepted narratives and the consequences these challenges bring about. The qualitative study of stakeholder implications

provided by Rabbi & Habib (2019) highlights the difficulty in using government-led reforms for deeply rooted education system in madrassas.

Methodology/ Theoretical Framework

Using an explanatory approach, the study examines the motivations of students enter madrassas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan using Qualitative methodology (Khan, 2016). Religious scholars, graduates, and students from madrassas make up the population. Data is gathered from secondary sources and interviews using purposeful sampling. The goal of the qualitative analysis is to identify themes associated with the goals of the research. There are limitations because of the tiny population size and the district's geographic concentration on the Swat, and because of accessibility concerns, some data was gathered via telephone interviews.

The Social Capital Theory, especially the concept by Pierre Bourdieu in 1986 (Claridge, 2018), becomes a comprehensive approach to explore the motivations behind madrassa students' going to madrassa schools and the expected future achievements of madrasa graduates. This type of theory which is all about network, sociability and norms as a medium of transmitting the behaviors of individuals is key for understanding how family influence, close ties and the benefits accrued from madrassas contribute to the enrollment. Additionally, it shows the community values that graduates adopt, such as bonding socially and adhering to the religious principles. Critics contend this framework may reduce socio-economic and religious factors to one-dimensional items, even though the main point lies on how society networks and community values affect educational decisions, in addition to laying out professional paths of graduates, therefore, calling for a balanced approach that integrates religious and secular education to increase the chances in the larger economic market.
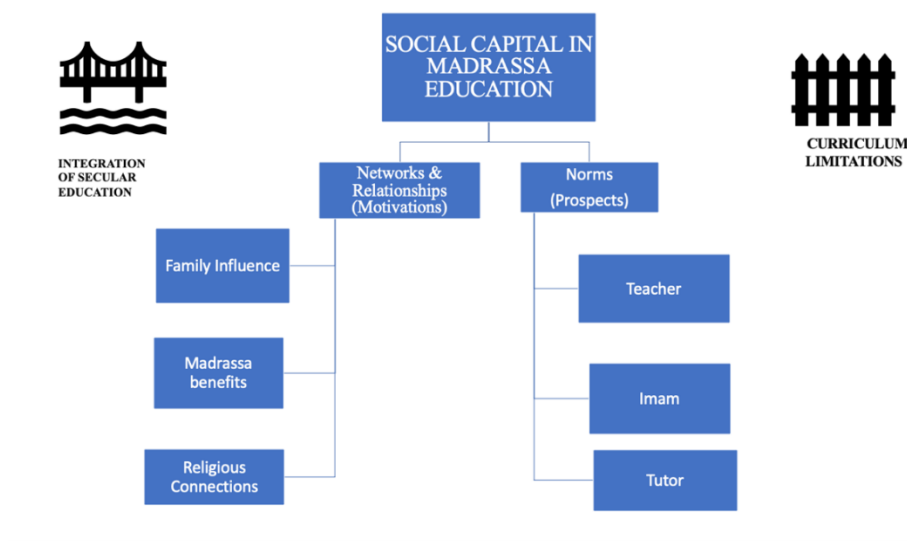
Problem Statement

The enrollment in madrassa education in Swat has seen a significant rise, from 200 students annually in 2000-2001 to over 500 in 2021-2022, as reported by Govt: Dar-ul-Uloom Islamia Saidu Sharif Swat. This surge is often attributed to poverty, but the full range of reasons behind parents' choice of religious schools remains unclear. Moreover, the curriculum and teaching methods in these madrassas are considered outdated, leaving graduates ill-equipped for the modern job market and contributing to their difficulty integrating into society both economically and socially (Dogar et. al, 2021).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to find out the motivation of students to join madrassa education and prospects of passed out students from madrassa education in District Swat, the

study aims 1. To find out motivations of students for joining madrassa education. 2. To investigate prospects of passed out students from madrassa education.

Motivations for Joining Madrassa Education

The provision of free education, accommodation, and food in madrassas serves as a significant incentive for underprivileged families, leading to it being a primary reason for student enrollment (Nayyar, 1998; Hussain, 2007). Economic necessity is a major driver for many choosing madrassas, but the decision is also influenced by the lack of quality education in public schools and a societal shift towards religious education to counteract Western influences (Andrabi, Das, Khwaja, & Zajonc, 2005; Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Chris, 2003).

Family traditions and the influence of elder students or relatives in madrassas foster trust and encourage parents to enroll their children, blending spiritual education with the expectation of obtaining formal education through cooperative schools (Corbett, 2004; Smith, 2003). Individual students frequently cite strong religious adherence as their primary motivation for enrolling in madrassa education, with factors like poverty and the desire for religious education being significant (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012; Fair, 2008).

Many families consider madrassa education a prestigious opportunity for their children to become religious scholars or Hafiz-e-Quran, viewing it as a means to attain a superior status in the eyes of God and the community (Riaz, 2005; Nelson, 2008). The absence of tuition fees and the provision of basic necessities make madrassas an attractive option for families experiencing financial stress, regardless of the varied socioeconomic backgrounds of the students (Thimmaraya & Venkateshvarlu, 2018; Shami & Hussain, 2006).

The aspiration to memorize the Quran is a personal and familial motivation, often supported by the community and seen as a path to gaining religious authority and respect (Adamec, 2009). A deep-seated emotional connection with Islam, nurtured by family and community, drives students towards madrassa education in search of spiritual fulfillment and societal acceptance (Ellison, 1991; Smith, 2003).

Prospects of passed out students from madrassa education

Madrassa education confers on its graduates a distinguished title such as Molvi or Ulama, indicating their profound understanding of Islamic scholarship after comprehensive studies in religious institutions (Alias & Musa, 2014). These institutions focus on Islamic teachings, including Quranic recitation, Tafseer, Hadith, and principles of Islamic jurisprudence among other subjects. Graduates are thus well-prepared for roles as Islamic scholars, teachers, or religious leaders. The curriculum primarily emphasizes religious education, with some institutions incorporating contemporary subjects to a limited extent. The majority, however, remain focused on traditional Islamic scholarship due to a lack of a robust monitoring system for curriculum diversification (Judd, 2014; Ahmad, 2002; Ali, 2009).

Madrassa graduates often engage significantly with their communities, assuming roles such as religious teachers, mosque imams, or community educators. This involvement is a testament to the social interaction and cohesion they foster, as defined by Turner (1988). Their positions within the community are usually attributed to their moral behavior, educational background, and recommendations from elder teachers or community members, highlighting the importance of social bonds and interaction in their professional journey (Bano, 2007).

Home tutoring, particularly in Quranic education, is a common avenue for madrassa graduates (Zafar, 2020). The selection for such positions often reflects the community's respect for their moral conduct and the endorsements of senior educators. This form of teaching not only enhances the tutor's reputation within the community but also strengthens the educational fabric by promoting Islamic teachings at a personal level (Bano, 2007; Harden & M.Ed, 2019).

Madrassa graduates frequently serve as mediators in societal disputes, utilizing their religious knowledge to offer solutions based on Islamic law. This role is especially valued in communities where formal judicial processes are seen as slow or inaccessible. Through

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institutions like Dar-ul-ifta, they provide quick, trusted judgments that, while not legally binding, are respected and followed due to the muftis' esteemed position and the public's faith in their fairness and understanding of Islamic law (Andrabi et al., 2005; Goldberg et al., 2017). Unlike the widespread belief that the graduates of madrasas are always punctual and most principled, they still find it hard to get a job in the formal sector such as the administration and accounts due to their incompetence in the subjects that are not in the madrasas religious curriculum (Dehraj & Bhatti, 2020). Theological grounding of Muslims not only portrays them as a group but also puts them into a position when it comes to ethical decision-making. Nevertheless, their positions are limited in terms of skill shortages existing in the mathematics, science, and information technology fields which are vital for more extended employment avenues (Hasani, 2017). Those who graduate from madrassa have such a wealth of knowledge of Arabic that they can be employed as qualified teachers, especially in the modern universities and institutions which really need the best Arabic language tutors. They are academically qualified to not only teach the language of Arabic but also for imparting dawah by connecting Islamic teachings and the Arabic language. In fact, this position enables them to influence a large number of Muslims, including many Muslim students. Due to this, the communication of the Quran and Sunnah is amplified (Nayyar, 1998; Olsen, 2016).

Conclusion

This qualitative study dealt with motivations of students for attending madrassa education and the scope of job opportunities for its graduates besides underscoring the role played by family, religion and economic services in the madrassas. Through the results it became clear that in spite of the significant role of these institutions in promoting religious learning and spiritual development, the limitations of the line of training students receive becomes apparent in the reduced job opportunities available to them. Also, even if their communities consider graduates as professionals who lead the teaching of religion or vulnerable groups, their lack of professional communication and technical skills handicaps their opportunities to get jobs outside their community. This research lays bare the functioning of religious dedication, conventional conduct, and economic matter that determines the life of students and graduates of madrassa, thus, the need for curriculum modifications to upgrade their job skills and make them more sustainable in the society is highly emphasized.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the researcher made the following recommendations to be tackle by the responsible party in order to develop further the madrassa education

Exploring Motivations and Prospects of Madrassa Education

- Madrassa curriculum should be highly developed so that students passed out from madrassa education have high chances to get jobs in formal sector.
- Problems related to madrassa should be mainstreamed to government so that they design policies for the betterment of madrassa students as well as madrassa education.
- Every madrassa should be linked with government board.
- Madrassa students should continue their formal education along with madrassa education.
- Government should pass a bill in parliament in which they fix funds for the development of madrassa education.
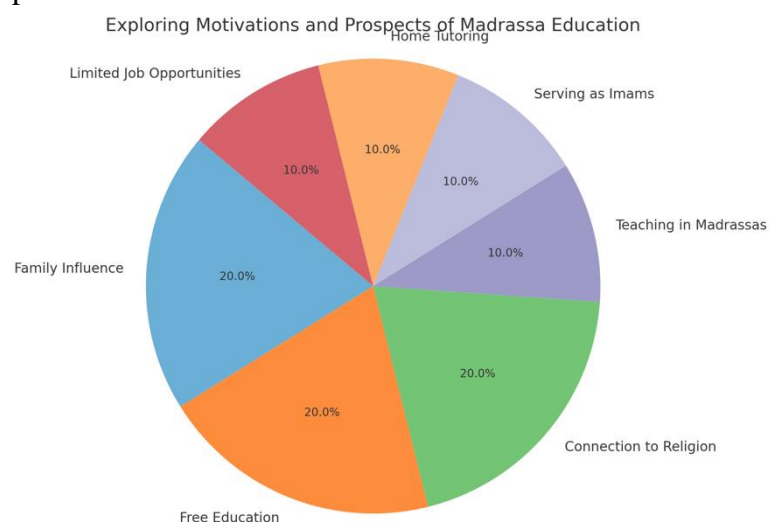
- Computer knowledge and advance scientific knowledge should be educated to madrassa students which will assist them in their realistic life.
- Government should work on raising the prospects for madrassa graduates in dissimilar sectors of the country.
- Children should be occupied and caught up in formulating child protection policies in madrassa.
- Expand the standard of *madrassa* education and creating service opportunities for students, in harmonization with administration institutions.
- The implementation of madrassa education in conditions of management must be allocated with budget in order to run smoothly.
- There must be a standard curriculum to be implemented and be observed by every teacher who is assigned in the teaching force.

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