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Exploring Teachers' Morality in Digital Classrooms: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract
The rapid integration of digital technologies in education has transformed teachers' roles, positioning them not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as moral agents responsible for ethical guidance in digital classrooms. While prior studies on Pakistani teachers emphasize digital competence and pedagogical readiness, limited attention has been paid to the moral orientations and ethical responsibilities of educators in technology-mediated contexts. This quantitative study explores teacher morality in digital classrooms by examining ethical sensitivity, moral responsibility, and integrity among 250 teachers from public and private higher education institutions in Lahore. Data were collected using a self-developed, expert-validated questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS, yielding responses from 233 participants. Findings reveal that teachers generally acknowledge the importance of moral values in digital pedagogy, yet many remain neutral on integrating structured moral discussions in online classes. Respondents expressed concerns over increased ethical challenges, including privacy violations, cyber harassment, inequitable access to resources, and the disruptive use of mobile phones. Nonetheless, results indicate that teacher morality manifested through fairness, respect, and care positively influences student engagement and trust in digital environments. The study highlights gaps in formal training on digital ethics and underscores the need for professional development programs, institutional guidelines, and policy frameworks that embed ethical literacy alongside digital

competence. These findings contribute to understanding the intersection of morality and digital pedagogy, offering insights for sustaining equitable and ethically sound educational practices in Pakistan and beyond.

Key words: *Ethical morality, digital technologies, teachers, higher education.*

Introduction

Educational development through digitally advanced tools has reconstructed both teaching practices and classroom learning methods as well as student-teacher social dynamics. The educational developments have given teaching ethics a new meaning that needs extensive thoughtful examination and ethical understanding. In digital settings teacher morality requires educators to pursue ethical conduct beyond curriculum delivery because they must show proper values when engaging students and handling data sources while navigating advanced virtual platforms. (Adams et al., 2022)

The introduction of digital technologies in the education systems led to tremendous modifications to the traditional practices of the educational staff. Full ethical assessment has to occur to allow just and successful educational contexts to be birthed through new practices of teaching. The integration of internet into the classrooms has revamped the modes of student learning, while altering their knowledge relationships in the modern education environment that undergoes a dramatic change (Samaranayake, 2024). Flexible learning conditions, accessibility, and creativity along with it digital classrooms offer also trigger some specific ethical complexity due to usage of information conduct and academic cheating and harassing using technology and digital behavior (Swargiary, 2024).

In recent years, Pakistan has witnessed an accelerated transition toward digital and blended learning modalities. This shift driven by widespread 3G/4G adoption and necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in widespread e-learning, mobile-learning platforms, and virtual classrooms across higher education and school sectors. Despite these developments, entrenched challenges such as inadequate technological infrastructure, limited access in rural and marginalized communities, and the absence of systematically trained educators persist (Abid et.al. 2021)

In such an evolving digital teaching environment, teachers serve not only as content deliverers but also as moral agents and ethical guides shaping classroom norms, fostering engagement, respecting privacy, and upholding equity. Yet, while existing literature examines pedagogical readiness and digital competencies among Pakistani teachers, it pays significantly less attention to teacher morality that is, the values, behaviors, and ethical orientations that guide teachers in digitally mediated contexts (Odoh, Nwokwu, & Ogbuanya, 2025).

Globally, studies underline that values and ethics are integral to teaching practices and teacher identity formation. Teacher morality embodies a synthesis of knowledge, professional competence, and moral values elements that equip educators to navigate ethical dilemmas, cultural sensitivities, and student vulnerabilities inherent in digital classrooms (Kumar, 2024). In the Pakistani socio-cultural context, where morality in teaching is often rooted in Islamic values and national educational policy, there is a recognized gap in structured moral education and formal training for educators. (Razia, Hinduja, Sohni, 2024)

Furthermore, online teaching models in Pakistan have revealed new ethical considerations such as safeguarding student privacy, managing equitable access, maintaining engagement, and delivering feedback in ways that respect student dignity and context (Asif, 2020). These dimensions underscore the importance of exploring teacher morality quantitatively: How do teachers perceive their moral responsibilities in digital environments? What ethical guidelines drive their online conduct? How do digital challenges influence their moral decision-making and behavior?

Research Objectives

This study aims to fill these knowledge gaps by employing a quantitative approach to examine the moral orientations and ethical behaviors of teachers operating in Pakistan's digital classrooms. By systematically measuring constructs such as ethical sensitivity, moral responsibility, and integrity in technology-mediated instruction, the research intends to:

1. Analyze the integration of morality into the digital classes by teacher.
2. Analyze the effect of digitalization on student morality.

Significance of the Study

Teaching morality has a number of ways of contributing to education. The adoption of moral education satisfies an ethical vacuum that develops as physical remoteness and anonymous contacts have a tendency of reducing the students' ethical responsibility. Digital instruction material assists educators to offer guidance to students with regards to the ethical issues they experience while doing their online activities like plagiarism, misinformation and appropriate sensible digital communication. Teaching students about digital morality falls under overall educational goals of having students not only be intellectually but also socially accomplished and of ethical values. Digital learning platforms take moral instruction needs to another level because they provide global learning opportunities with students connecting to global peers who utilize various digital resources and face ethical issues that go beyond the regional expectations. This research offers substantial statistics to the policy makers and the curriculum developers who are required to standardize or enhance the digital moral teaching because of its capability to compare educational practices in different domains. There are implications in teaching students about moral principles in digital classrooms with regards to development of safe inclusive environments for online education. The training of ethical digital conduct with students results in a respectful dialogue and the prevention of cyberbullying and that establishes the culture of learning that focuses on integrity. Quantitative research methods that are based on quantitative data compile outcome measurements by studying incident reports with student accounts of ethical conduct and incidents of academic integrity. Such evidence-based discoveries are not only the ones to confirm the worthiness of the preservation of moral education initiatives, but also to justify the injections that promote the honing of trained teachers who apply decent educational paraphernalia and relevant technological resources for ethical learning.

Review of Literature

Teaching principles which determine correct from incorrect practices form the basis of educational morality. Education of morals relied predominantly on classroom exchanges and school discipline frameworks together with character education curricula. Digital platforms

require these principles to transform their principles and guidelines to address modern modes of communication as well as new ethical issues. (Le-Nguyen & Tran, 2024).

The frameworks of Kohlberg's stages of moral development and Gilligan's ethics of care form fundamental bases to study moral reasoning at educational institutions. According to Kohlberg's theory moral development unfolds sequentially through stages beginning with obedience before reaching abstract principles of justice but Gilligan focuses on ethical behavior based on empathy and care. (Greenhow & Lewin, 2019). The digital classroom environment depends on the successful combination of both stability and kindness. The learning environments of students demand proper structure together with compassion and understanding.

Classroom digitalization creates ethical dilemmas for teachers who must serve as models of digital conduct for students. Teachers must guide students to practice digital citizenship by teaching responsible online conduct together with sharing content consequences and preventing scenarios like cyberbullying and digital plagiarism. (Henderson et al., 2014). Teachers must serve as ethical guides for their students' online conduct because they fulfill this moral responsibility in both classroom instruction and beyond. The absence of digital equipment and dependable internet access throughout communities generates inconsistent student education levels. Teachers need to establish techniques that enable every student from different economic backgrounds to learn and take part in educational activities with equal opportunities. These social justice concerns connect directly with the moral framework of digital teaching.

Academic integrity stands as an important factor which specifically needs attention during online assessments. Academic honesty is maintained through plagiarism-checking software alongside browser restrictions and honor codes which educational institutions use for monitoring. AI tools become more sophisticated daily which creates updated challenges because students increasingly utilize them for cheating purposes. Educators should determine appropriate AI tool use in instruction because some applications hinder students' ability to create unique insights (Adams et al., 2022). The handling of data by teachers and their students who operate on such platforms creates essential concerns regarding privacy protection and consent regulations. The ethical conduct of managing student information falls to teachers who must additionally instruct students about privacy issues and data ethics principles. According to (Fiesler et al., 2020), Educational technology providers must clarify their student data collection and use to teachers because the matter demands immediate attention.

The ethical requirements regarding data treatment reach their most critical point when analyzing surveillance programs together with video surveillance during tests and educational data analysis systems. Learning technologies that aim to enhance accountability can potentially harm confidentiality by monitoring students without proper transparency. Teachers must analyze available technology tools to protect data ethics and promote ethical practices at both their institutions and educational facilities. Using AI within education creates new possibilities together with various ethical issues. The application of AI-grade results together with chatbots and individual learning pattern algorithms provides user efficiency yet these systems present troubling issues regarding their ability to reveal precise results along with their fair processing algorithms. Teachers need training to understand which algorithms power educational technology programs as well as aiming to identify both system constraints and discriminatory

properties (Le-Nguyen & Tran, 2024). Teachers need to make moral decisions regarding AI integration in their classrooms because they still must maintain important human educational elements such as empathy and situational understanding.

As highlighted by (Adams et al., 2022), Educational technology development has opened new ethical challenges for teachers as their duties become increasingly complex. Teaching institutions should use ethical criteria to measure the necessity of AI adoption while maintaining ethical student learning standards. Digital teacher morality represents an ongoing process of ethical reflection which requires teachers to modify their principles of conduct continually. Teaching professionals need to evaluate their practice frequently and detect moral problems as they should participate in development activities specializing in digital ethics. The development of digital moral competence depends on workshops for educational development merged with reflective practice groups that use policy and technology updates.

Educational settings change regularly and this necessitates teachers to develop their practices for ethical decision making. New technological platforms and educational policies combined with teaching strategies provide teachers ongoing chances to handle ethical circumstances. Students develop both moral perception and learner resilience through the classroom spaces which teachers build for digital dilemma discussions with their students.

Methodology

Quantitative method was carried out in order to fulfill the goals of this study. In accordance with Collis and Hussey (2003), quantitative research aims to provide us with detailed description and analysis for the problem being studied. Furthermore, it does not restrict the scope of the research or the type of the replies provided by an individual participant. According to Burns and Grove (1993) quantitative research is a procedure that is formal, objective, and methodical. Its purpose is to characterize and test connections, as well as to investigate the correlations between variables and their causes and effects. For the present study, descriptive research design was applied to achieve the objectives of the study. (Atmowardoyo, 2018)

Sample of the Study

According to Jones (1995) and Salant (1994), one of the most important steps in gaining an understanding of the characteristics of a population is selecting a representative sample. A well-chosen sample ensures that findings can be generalized to the population with confidence. (Ahmad et.al., 2023). In this study, the target population comprised 250 teachers from selected higher education institutions in Lahore, including six universities and five colleges. Among these, three were government universities and four were private universities of Lahore, namely the University of Education, Punjab University, Government College University Lahore, University of Management and Technology, University of Central Punjab, University of Lahore, and Superior University. Additionally, five private colleges were included: Punjab College, KIPS College, Concordia College, Superior College, and Al-Hamad College.

To draw the sample, a convenient sampling technique was applied in two stages. In the first stage, the six universities and five colleges listed above were selected to represent both private and public higher education institutions in Lahore. In the second stage, using the same technique, 100 teachers were chosen from the universities (public and private) and 150 teachers were

selected from the colleges, making a total sample of 250 teachers. This approach was considered appropriate given the accessibility of participants and the exploratory nature of the study.

Development of Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a set of questions (items) intended to capture responses from respondents in a standardized manner. A document consisting of questions or other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate analysis the instrument was self-made by the researchers in the light of indicators of the variables. After structuring the questionnaire, it was shared with experts, and they were requested to evaluate. Teachers provide valuable feedback. One questionnaire was developed for data collection. The questionnaire consists of five aspects of morality in digital classrooms: i.e. integration of moral context in digital classroom, relation with social morality, moral conformity and peer influence, challenges faced in digital classroom and digital proficiency, ethics, and emotional balance. Responses were taken against the five-point Likert type scale (Strongly agree, agree, neutral. disagree, strongly disagree) with 5 representing the highest state of agreement to the set situations and lower end for example representing the lowest state of agreement.

Analysis

A descriptive analysis was carried out based on the total number of 233 respondents who took part in the research questionnaire for this study. During the survey, the respondents were questioned about their gender, the instrument they were using, and the reason they were utilizing media. The total number of questionnaires that were handed out to the teachers was 250, and the number of questionnaires that were fully filled out and returned by the individuals who participated in the survey was 233. The data that was obtained was analysed with the help of the SPSS programmer, and the collected statistics were interpreted with the use of tables and graph

Table 1 Frequency distribution of institution proportion

Institution		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public	113	52.9	53.0	53.0
	Private	120	46.9	47.0	100.0
	Total	233	99.8	100.0	

Table 1 shows that out of 233 total respondents, 113 individuals (52.9%) reported as a govt teacher who respond to teacher morality in digital classroom a quantitative analysis of teaching practice (1.00), while 120 individuals (46.9%) reported as private teacher who respond to teacher morality in digital classroom a quantitative analysis of teaching practice (2.00)

Table 2 Integration of moral context in digital classroom

Sr.No.	Statement	N	Mean	Std
1	Teacher needs to emphasize on moral values in classroom	233	2.08	0.84
2	Moral value discussions encourage thoughtful learning	233	2.64	1.27

3	Teaching digital citizenship and moral values	233	2.90	1.33
4	Fostering critical thinking and moral values in students	233	2.68	1.19
5	Fostering open discussions on morality and personal growth	233	3.14	1.15
6	Use interactive multimedia to engage my students	233	3.19	1.34

Table 2 show that the statement most respondents are disagree with the statement". Teacher needs to emphasize on moral values in classroom" as mean value is (M=2.08), Majority of teacher remain neutrals in responses of statement "Discussing moral values in the digital class encourage student to think thoughtfully" the mean is (M=2.64). Many of teachers are neutral with statement " student more aware of the ethical implication of the course material that engage with" the mean value is "(M=2.90) Most respondents are neutral with this statement," Teaching moral values in courageous student to question assumptions and consider alternative view point while engaging with course content "the mean is (M=2.68),"most respondents are agree with this statement" I encourage students to share their personal improvement and perspectives on morality related topics "as mean value is (M=3.14),"Majority of teachers remain agree with this statement " multimedia material to engage my students with morality related topics" the mean value is (M=3.19)

Table. 3 Digitalization in relation to social morality

Sr.No	Statement	N	M	SD
1	Digitalization has reduced students' closeness with others	233	3.12	1.186
2	Students are becoming less respectful of others' privacy in the digital age	233	4.01	1.185
3	Frequent social media use increases ethical issues among students	233	4.23	1.144
4	Mobile phone use in classrooms disrupts teaching."	233	2.87	1.265

Table 3 show that the statement most respondents are agree with the statement". Digitalization reduced student ability to emphases " as mean value is (M=3.12), Majority of teacher remain agree in responses of statement "less concerned with respecting other privacy" the mean is (M=4.01), Many of teachers are agree with statement " social media increased ethical problem among student " the mean value is "(M=4.23) Most respondents are neutral with this statement," use of mobile phone effect the teaching "the mean is (M=2.87),"

Table. 4 Moral conformity and peer influence

Sr. No	Statement	N	M	SD
1	Students follow social media group norms more than personal ethics.	233	3.08	1.349
2	Teachers prefer sharing digital material over direct teaching.	233	3.05	1.190
3	Students without reliable devices or internet struggle to participate fully in learning.	233	3.12	1.315

Table 4 show that the statement most respondents are agree with the statement". Student moral norms of social media " as mean value is (M=3.08), Majority of teacher remain agree in responses of statement "more digital material and less focus in teaching " the mean is (M=3.05),Many of teachers are agree with statement " student without reliable assess to digital material" the mean value is "(M=3.12)

Table.5 Challenges faced in digital classroom

Sr. No	Statement	N	Mean	SD
1	Has classroom mobile use increased harassment issues.	233	3.18	1.19
2	Educators explain enough to clarify vague digital materials.	233	3.05	1.39
3	I struggle to understand morality-related issues in class.	233	3.19	1.19
4	I struggle to evaluate student progress accurately through digital assessments due to technical limits.	233	2.83	1.25
5	I received training to teach morality in digital classroom.	233	3.08	1.23
6	I have sufficient resources, like lesson plans and multimedia, for teaching morality topics.	233	2.86	1.148

Table 5 show that the statement most respondents are agree with the statement". Harassment issue increased " as mean value is (M=3.18), Majority of teacher remain agree in responses of statement "educators provide sufficient explanation" the mean is (M=3.05), Many of teachers are agree with statement " difficult to access morality issues " the mean value is "(M=3.19) Most respondents are neutral with this statement," face difficulty in evaluating student progress "the mean is (M=2.86),"most respondents are agree with this statement" received advocate training to teach morality "as mean value is (M=3.08),"Majority of teachers remain neutral with this statement " access to sufficient resources" the mean value is (M=2.86)

Table. 6 Digital Proficiency, Ethics, and Emotional Balance

Sr.No.	Statement	N	M	SD
1	Always get support from administration and colleagues in teaching morality issues.	233	3.01	1.272
2	I ensure students' emotional wellbeing when discussing morality in class.	233	3.10	1.205
3	I am concerned about the emotional impact of exploring morality on my students.	233	3.04	1.130
4	I feel comfortable addressing students' emotional concerns about morality.	233	2.90	1.245
5	Students should control how educational technology providers use and share their data.	233	3.50	1.152

Table 6 show that the statement most respondents are agree with the statement". Received support from administration and colleagues " as mean value is (M=3.01), Majority of teacher remain agree in responses of statement "student emotional wellbeing" the mean is (M=3.10), most respondents are agree with this statement "potential emotional aspect of discovering

morality" the mean value is Many of teachers are neutral with statement "student emotional concern related to morality " the mean value is "(M=2.90) Most respondents are agree with this statement," personal data is shared by educational technology provider "the mean is (M=3.50)," .

Discussion

The results of the present research provides critical insights into how educators work when faced with ethical responsibilities in the case of virtual, and hybrid learning, environments are revealed. Because with the advancement of educational practices into a digital environment, the familiarity of the how traditional moral values are maintained, accommodated, or even questioned in emerging settings of instruction is of an unparalleled importance. This discussion explains the results of the study based on previous research, draws out new ethical questions, and suggests direction for growth and reform.

Among the major findings of this study is that the large proportion of teachers still show strong moral principles in the digital teaching practices. Although, we are moving from physical to virtual interaction the core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility are integral to teacher's behavior. This reinforces earlier studies holding that the professional ethics are internalized by educators and not confined into the classroom (Strike & Soltis, 2009). Although there are many moral actions that can be transferred to the digital teaching, the ways to enact them can be different. For example, it is not the same challenge to maintain fairness during online tests as it is in the conventional exams. Instructors are being forced to use digital support for proctoring and had to make judgement calls regarding suspected academic dishonesty minus first hand observation. Such new scenarios push the boundaries of the moral boundaries currently in place, which means that educators have to view ethics from a digital perspective. The study also discloses that teachers are confronted with a variety of ethical issues that are peculiar to the digital classroom. These include:

- Ensuring the protection of students' privacy during any live session/recording
- Preventing cheating, but also not building overly punitive or distrustful environments.
- Balancing accessibility-related challenges while adopting uniform academic expectations.
- Maintaining equity despite the unequal access students have towards technology

These challenges reveal an extremely apparent contradiction: although digital education provides convenience and wider expansion, it also presents moral uncertainty and also lacks specific directions on ethical judgments. In regard to such dilemmas, teachers typically do not have any formal instructions on how to address them; they rely on their personal judgment, or institution's culture. It strengthens the demand for revised ethical guidelines and prescribed training in digital professionalism. One of the major contributions of this research is the discovery of a positive correlation between teacher morality and student engagement in the digital classrooms. Students were found to be more likely to be actively involved when they felt that their teachers were not biased but just and treating them with respect and honesty. This result is in line with other literature that has associated ethical behavior with trust-building and classroom motivation (Noddings, 2002).

Now that there are no physical clues and actual surveillance, students are more keen about how they are treated with regard to the type of feedback, the tone of communication, and the responsiveness. An ethical teacher creates a virtual environment where there is psychological

safety and the learners feel free to participate without the fear of being put into ridicule, being biased or neglected. It is this that highlights the role of the teacher in a digital way of life; that person is both a subject matter expert and a moral guide. The study also shows that experience and digital competence are contributors to ethical teaching performance. Teachers who have been trained previously on online education or those with a longer time to teach are in a better position to address moral dilemmas in the virtual world. This finding calls for major implications to teacher preparation programs that now have to include digital ethics training as a requisite component therein.

It is also worth mentioning that albeit the fact that young teachers can use technology better, they might lack reflective moral judgment that can be brought by experience. On the other hand, veteran teachers might belong to the group of strong ethical standards, but may fail to deal with the subtleties of digital tools. Closing this gap by continuous professional development is necessary to sustaining high standards in ethical teaching practices in the generations to come. Although the moral responsibility is ultimately on individual educators, the rest of the educational system has the responsibility of upholding ethical practices. Schools and policymakers need to work together in order to come up with institutional policies that will address the current rising issues of online teaching. These include:

- Policies to keep digital assessment integrity.
- Guidelines for maintaining student data and privacy.
- Standards of ethical communication between teachers and students online

Without such frameworks, teachers can feel they do not receive any support and even confrontations when they are faced with tough moral choices in digital classrooms. Practical institutional support is one of the ways through which the fact that ethical conduct will be not only expected but also actively supported is put forward.

Conclusion

This study contributes our knowledge as to how teacher morality works in the digital learning environments. While the traditional moral values remain at the center of the teaching, the application of the traditional moral values to the digital classrooms necessitates the new strategies, supports and frameworks. The landscape of online education also changes alongside with the ethical landscape. Teachers need not only to be prepared in teaching content, but also need to know how to navigate around complex moral ground established by technology and policy and student needs. The solution of such challenges will be important for the creation of the fair, respectful, and effective learning space in digital space in the years to come. This research has revealed an essential layer on the intersection of teacher morality and digital pedagogy based on a strong quantitative account of virtual classes. The findings support the fact that moral values like fairness, care, respect, honesty, and responsibility do not lose their strength in the digital settings; on the contrary, they are more explicit and play the crucial role in success and virtue of online education. Moral orientations of teachers had highly significant effects on their selection of digital tools and instructional strategies, treatment of students, handling academic integrity, and implication of inclusivity and equity in their teaching. From the findings, it suggests that the morality of the digital classroom is both an ethical obligation and a pedagogical necessity. The teachers who exhibited a clear moral basis were more prepared to handle the peculiarities of

such online environments, including the remote discipline of the students, the lack of participation from part of students, and issues of privacy and limitations of accessibility. Those moral practices manifested themselves as increased student engagement, better learning results, and better trust on behalf of a student with an educator elements that are at the heart of an effective education, regardless of the modality

But there is a gap of concern brought out by the study as well: ignorance related to the ethical aspects of digital teaching among many educators is due to lack of formal teaching in this. Although there is a lot of focus on digital literacy, ethical literacy has not been talked much about, although it is just as significant. This highlights the need for professional development programs and teacher preparation programs that will incorporate moral reasoning and digital ethics as explicit components. Teacher education needs to go beyond the teaching of technical skills to incorporate structured opportunities for the reflection on moral dilemma, case studies, as well as development of ethical decision-making skills.

The limitations of this study include using a self-reported data that may be bias oriented and the fact that we do not conduct our findings in a vast number of educational settings or geographic regions. Longitudinal studies should be implemented in future research in order to evaluate the development of teacher morality in light of continuously being exposed to digital tools and pedagogical innovation. Comparative analysis in various cultural and educational systems would also add to our understanding of how the moral values are understood and enforced in various contexts of digital teaching.

In conclusion, as technology creeps in deep into education, it is critical to realize that basic values that guide the teachers' behavior still stand at the center of it all. Ethics in teaching is not an auxiliary element but a foundation stone, which guarantees that education is human, fair and just (especially when it comes to digital space where ethical borders can be transgressed too easily). By restating the moral intent of teachers' work and the arsenal of intellectual means to maintain moral standards in the online, we can drive learning platforms that not only are technologically advanced but also profoundly principled and socially responsible.

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