Generational Shifts: Unraveling the Dynamics of Family Structure in Contemporary Pakistan through Islamic Lens

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Abstract: *This research scholar article undertakes a nuanced exploration of generational shifts within family structures in contemporary Pakistani society through an Islamic lens. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study intricately examines the dynamics of family structures and the influence of Islam on their evolution. By critically addressing the shifting cultural landscape and fluid concepts of Muslim identity, Islamophobia, and racialization, the article provides insightful perspectives within the context of contemporary Pakistan. The research sheds light on generational tensions and solidarity within advanced welfare states, contributing a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of family structures influenced by Islam. This scholarly contribution enriches the comprehension of evolving family dynamics and the pivotal role of Islam in shaping familial structures in contemporary Pakistan. The research also explores the role of gender equality in shaping family structures, examining how the increasing prevalence of education and female employment in Pakistan is leading to a shift away from traditional patriarchal values and towards a more balanced approach to family dynamics. This change is likely to have a lasting impact on future generations, as women continue to play more active roles in society and challenge traditional gender roles. In addition, the study investigates the influence of cultural and religious practices on family life, focusing on how Pakistani families often follow traditional religious and cultural practices, which can create challenges as younger generations seek to balance these practices with changing cultural and economic. By examining the intersection of Islamic values and changing family dynamics, the research aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of family structures influenced by Islam in contemporary Pakistan.*

Keywords: Generational shifts, Family structure, Contemporary Pakistan, Islam, and Cultural dynamics

Introduction

The traditional Muslim family provides stability, coherence, and support, especially during difficult times. It is typically extended, spanning three or more generations (Nauman, 2015). In Muslim culture, respect and esteem grow with age, and senior parents are esteemed for their life experiences and social standing (Zia, 2017). Islamic family jurisprudence, also known as Muslim Family Law, is a fiqh of laws

and regulations relating to maintaining a Muslim family, derived from Quran, hadith, fatwas, and ijma. It covers topics like pubertal, marital, sexual, child upbringing, adoption, inheritance, and criminal matters (Dr. Najii Al-Arfaj, 2019).

Children and teenagers' emotions are greatly shaped by their familial environment, which has a long-lasting effect on each person's personality and behavior (Koren-Karie et al., 2012). Research suggests that family struggles have the potential to disrupt emotional well-being and, in extreme cases, may escalate to instances of violence (Choe & Zimmerman, 2013). In the tapestry of societal evolution, understanding evolving family dynamics emerges as a critical focal point.

This research scholar article embarks on an exploration of the intricate interplay between time, culture, and familial structures. By unravelling the threads of change woven into family dynamics, the study aims to illuminate the diverse factors shaping contemporary familial landscapes. Navigating the nuanced shifts in roles, values, and relationships across generations, this research seeks to offer valuable insights into the evolving nature of family structures.

The research also explores the influence of Islamic principles on family structure, including the concepts of marriage and divorce, the position of women, and the role of the family in society. The Islamic law of family encompasses explicit guidelines for marriage and divorce, underscoring the divine inspiration behind the family as an institution. Within the Islamic framework, the family is regarded as a heavenly-ordained entity, not the product of human experimentation or gradual evolution. Instead, it is considered to have originated with the emergence of humankind, embodying a divinely inspired and timeless institution, with marriage occupying a central role.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ، واحِدَةٍ، وخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا ونِسَاءً واتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ والأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

"O men, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul, and from it created its match, and spread many men and women from the two. Fear Allah in whose name you ask each other (for your rights), and fear (the violation of the rights of) the womb-relations. Surely, Allah is watchful of you." (Al-Nisa 4:1)

According to the Holy Quran, marriage has been commended as the path of the Prophets,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلاً مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

"We have sent messengers before you and gave those wives and children. It is not for a messenger to bring a verse without the will of Allah. For every age, there are some rules prescribed." (Ar-Ra'ad 13:38)

This research scholar article provides a comprehensive overview of family structure in Pakistan, exploring the intricate dynamics that shape familial relationships in this diverse and culturally rich nation. With a specific focus on the influence of Islam, the study delves into the generational shifts and changing cultural conditions that impact the foundations of family life. Through qualitative research, the article aims to offer valuable insights into the complexities of family structures, addressing the evolving concepts of Muslim identity, Islamophobia, and racialization within the contemporary context of Pakistan. This exploration contributes to a nuanced understanding of the role of Islam and cultural factors in shaping family dynamics in the diverse landscape of Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This research article provides a comprehensive examination of family structures in Pakistan, with a particular emphasis on generational changes and the influence of Islamic principles. Traditional family dynamics, encompassing aspects such as marriage, divorce, and gender roles, are scrutinized through a qualitative research approach. The study seeks to understand how Islamic principles shape and influence family dynamics, emphasizing key elements such as marriage, family unity, and the overall well-being of each member. Through this exploration, the article aims to contribute valuable insights into the evolving nature of family structures in Pakistan within the context

of Islamic teachings.

Literature Review

The literature surrounding the examination of generational shifts within family structures in contemporary Pakistan through an Islamic lens is rich and diverse, reflecting the complex interplay of cultural, societal, and religious factors. Numerous scholars have explored the multifaceted dynamics of family life, shedding light on the impact of Islam on evolving familial paradigms.

Koren-Karie et al. (2012) emphasize the pivotal role of family environments in determining the feelings of adolescents, ultimately influencing individual personality and behaviour. Their work underscores the profound impact of family conflicts, which can prime to emotional disturbances and, in extreme cases, ferocity (Choe & Zimmerman, 2013). This perspective provides a foundational understanding of the significance of family dynamics in shaping individual experiences.

Within the Islamic context, the family is not merely a social construct but is perceived as a divinely ordained institution. This perspective is articulated by scholars such as Syed & Seiffge-Krenke (2013), who highlight the distinct guidelines provided by Islamic law for marriage and divorce. The family, according to Islamic teachings, is a manifestation of heavenly inspiration, existing since the emergence of humanity.

Building on this foundation, the literature further explores the intricate relationship between Islam and family dynamics in contemporary Pakistan. Smith & Moore (2013) delve into the emotional impact of family structures, emphasizing the need to understand the complexities of familial relationships in the context of cultural and religious influences. Unikel Santoncini et al. (2013) contribute to the discourse by examining the broader societal implications of family conflicts and their potential for violence.

In essence, the literature review reveals a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing family structures in contemporary Pakistan through an Islamic lens.

From the emotional and psychological dimensions to the legal and religious aspects, scholars have collectively provided a comprehensive framework for unravelling the generational shifts within family dynamics, contributing significantly to our understanding of the topic.

Discussion

The evolving patterns of family life in contemporary Pakistan are influenced by generational shifts and changing cultural and economic conditions. This study aims to explore the implications of these changes through an Islamic lens, focusing on the challenges and potential solutions faced by families. The study will look at how digitalization and technology affect family dynamics, the role of gender equality in shaping family structures, and the influence of cultural and religious practices on family life. By examining these factors, the study aims to provide insights into the evolving patterns of family life in Pakistan and offer potential solutions to address the challenges faced by families in this context.

Technology and digitalization significantly impact family systems and culture, shifting family values and socialization approaches, and affecting marital relations and interactions (Shahid; Tasgheer, 2021). This paper explores the impact of digital advancements on family life, focusing on Pakistani families and Islamic codes of life. It looks at foundations and tactics for influencing digital transformation from an Islamic and family standpoint.

Living communally is valued in Pakistani society, where women often live with their in-laws. Women's movement is determined by men under the patriarchal system, which limits their access to chances for education and employment. In Pakistan, marriage and motherhood are highly esteemed stages of development. However, because patriarchal expectations are so prevalent and families can either reinforce or negotiate these expectations in various ways, seeking an education and a career can be difficult (Zia, 2017).

The research also explores the role of gender equality in shaping family structures, examining

how the increasing prevalence of education and female employment in Pakistan is leading to a shift away from traditional patriarchal values and towards a more balanced approach to family dynamics (Qadeer, 2006). This change is likely to have a lasting impact on future generations, as women continue to play more active roles in society and challenge traditional gender roles.

In addition, the study investigates the influence of cultural and religious practices on family life, focusing on how Pakistani families often follow traditional religious and cultural practices, which can create challenges as younger generations seek to balance these practices with changing cultural and economic conditions (Eman, 2014). For example, the increasing prevalence of education and female employment is leading to a shift away from traditional patriarchal values and towards a more balanced approach to family dynamics.

The study concludes by providing insights into the evolving patterns of family life in Pakistan and offering potential solutions to address the challenges faced by families in this context. By examining the intersection of Islamic values and changing family dynamics, the research aims to donate to a comprehensive empathetic of the complexities of family structures influenced by Islam in contemporary Pakistan.

Generational shifts

The term "generational shift in family structure" encompasses changes in family composition and dynamics influenced by economic, social, and cultural factors over time. Millennials, as reported by the Pew Research Center (2020), are approaching family life differently than previous generations, exhibiting a lower likelihood of living with their family at the same life stage. The 1950s and 1960s emphasized families with two parents and children, while contemporary families exhibit a more diverse structure. The American family has undergone significant changes, eliminating a predominant family form. It's essential to recognize that these changes aren't inherently good or bad but reflect the evolving nature of society and culture. As society continues to change, family structures are expected to evolve accordingly (Faheem,

2023).

The Holy Quran praises the institution of marriage as the path followed by the Prophets (Evasion, 2016). The joint family system is a structural expression of Pakistani culture's communal spirit, and the family is revered as an institution endowed by God. People view families as giving support, consistency, and stability, especially during difficult times (ibid.). In Pakistan, marriage and motherhood are commonly regarded as significant life stages for women, and married women frequently face a number of obstacles when attempting to pursue a job (Chaudhary, 2022).

Pakistani families often follow traditional religious and cultural practices, such as prayer, fasting during Ramadan, and participating in Eid celebrations, which serve to strengthen family bonds and pass on values to future generations (Evasion, 2016). Despite the persistence of traditional values in Pakistani families, there is a growing trend towards modernization and cultural change, particularly in urban areas. This shift is evident in the increasing prevalence of education, female employment, and changing gender roles (ibid.). As a result, the family structure in Pakistan is gradually moving towards a more balanced approach, with traditional values coexisting alongside modern influences (Nauman, 2015).

The article highlights the noteworthy increase in the accessibility of harmonised datasets since the mid-1900s, as demonstrated by global organisations such as the IPUMS-International Project, OECD, UN, and Eurostat. There has been a persistent effort to standardise census criteria worldwide, however there are still difficulties in reaching consensus for comparative analysis of family structures. Between-census national sample surveys have the potential to pose compatibility and comparability concerns throughout time, requiring different definitions and conceptions for family, household, and generation. With an emphasis on areas like East Asia, Europe, and South America, this section examines widely used international concepts and how they have been applied in contemporary cross-national research (Pew Research Centre, 2020).

Educational reforms from Western countries are influencing Asian nations, Nasir (2005) argues that Pakistani society is characterized by "socio-cultural factors this society has inherited and maintained" (p. 77). This implies a transition, but not necessarily a Western one, from traditional to modern Pakistani society. The results indicate that despite modernization, the society remains deeply religious, with little fundamental difference in the perception of values between parents and the present generation. Cultural compromises may occur, but there is a steadfast commitment to religious aspects of values (Hallingera, 2010).

Preserving cultural and religious identity is a crucial aspect of parenting for South Asian Muslim families. As noted by Wakil et al., the exposure of children to various influences from the host society can lead to tension (1981, p. 929).

What is particularly important is the idea of family honour or "izzat" (Wakil et al., 1981, p. 937). The reputation of the family is of extreme importance, and individuals are expected to do everything they can to maintain the honour of their family name.

The customary extended family system, gender ideas, and cultural standards all influence Pakistani family structure. Communality is reflected in the joint family arrangement, in which women live with their in-laws. A male-dominated society's suppression of women in the role of daughter-in-law can fuel animosity and hostilities within blended or extended families. (Gangoli & Rew, 2011). Marriage and motherhood are crucial developmental milestones, but pursuing careers for married women often presents challenges. The study also explores how familial experiences shape and contest gender ideologies, highlighting the ongoing influence of Islamic principles on family dynamics. The changing cultural conditions and unstable concepts of Muslim, Islamophobia, and racialization in Pakistan influence these expectations (Faheem, 2022).

Traditional Pakistani gender roles significantly influence the parenting practices of parents in shaping the upbringing of their children. The differential treatment of girls and boys, deeply rooted in Pakistani cultural norms, is often transferred to second-generation children within these communities. Zaidi et al. (2014) note that religion, family, and community structures play a pivotal role in reinforcing and policing these traditional gender norms (p. 30). These gender roles echo historical and traditional practices where girls were confined to the home, groomed to be nurturing and obedient, while boys were encouraged to venture outside, learn to achieve, and become self-reliant breadwinners for the family (Zaidi et al., 2014, p. 31). The persistence of these roles reflects not only the influence of Pakistani cultural norms but also draws parallels with historical gender roles.

The joint family system in Pakistan is a manifestation of communality and serves as the foundation of society. Family ties are essential for survival due to low socioeconomic conditions. Though, career choices and financial independence for women in contemporary Pakistan are influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, gender ideologies, and the traditional extended family system. The Pakistani culture's feeling of communality is expressed structurally in the joint family system, and the family is revered as an institution inspired by God (Zaheer, 2022). However, the changing cultural conditions and unstable concepts of Muslim, Islamophobia, and racialization in contemporary Pakistan influence the roles and expectations within the family structure, leading to generational shifts in family dynamics (Kamran, 2023).

Empowering women through education and financial independence is crucial for their well-being and society's development. Pakistan can harness its female workforce's potential by providing equal opportunities for education and employment, addressing cultural, religious, and economic factors. Women in Pakistan face several challenges in pursuing their careers, including cultural and societal norms that often limit their opportunities for education and employment (Tanveer, 2023). Despite these challenges, women's financial independence is essential for a struggling economy like Pakistan, as financially independent women can make decisions that affect their lives and those of their

families (ibid.).

The Impact of Technology and Communication

The impact of machinery and communication on Pakistani family dynamics is complex, especially in the context of generational shifts and Islamic principles. The traditional Muslim family, often extended across generations, is seen as a divine institution providing stability and support. The widespread adoption of mobile phones and the internet has transformed communication and interaction, creating new opportunities and challenges for family relationships. However, concerns about privacy, security, and the impact of technology on family dynamics remain (Shahid; Tasgheer, 2021).

Debates concerning children's computer use have been created by the deployment of new technology in homes usage, frequency, and family dynamics. Typically used for simplifying life, entertainment, and knowledge acquisition, technology also impacts family dynamics. In her discussion of the interplay between technology and society, Ruth S. Cowan highlights a common focus on workplace advancements, online business, massive computers, and technological construction. However, she brings attention to the oversight of the technological revolution and digitalization within households. The transition from manual to electric power, the switch from wood and coal to gas and oil as cooking fuel, and the development from manual water pumping to flowing water are just a few examples of how Cowan highlights how this revolution has unexpectedly changed lives (2012).

Pakistan's rapid growth in technology, particularly smartphones and social media, is transforming daily life and society, impacting economic, social, and cultural values through the introduction of new services and software (Stryjak; James, 2016). Digitalization has significantly transformed the economic field, affecting families and society. Technology has improved living standards, providing affordable gadgets and assistance, making life easier and more comfortable than it was centuries ago. (IntelligentHQ, 2021)

The impact of generational shifts on family communication patterns in Pakistan is significant, particularly in the context of Islamic principles. The widespread adoption of mobile phones and the internet has transformed the way families communicate and interact, creating new opportunities and challenges for family relationships (Saleem, 2021). For example, the use of mobile phones and the internet has enabled families to access information and resources more easily, but it has also raised concerns about the impact of technology on family dynamics and the traditional extended family system (Rauf, 2018).

While technology has made life easier, it has also caused family strife. A discrepancy is revealed by tracking family usage. Investigations reveal that computers are mostly utilised for gaming, despite the belief held by some parents that they are used for homework and education. Adults and teenagers use email and cell phones extensively, and technology is employed extensively for communication. Nonetheless, there has been a rise in the usage of technology, especially cell phones (Villegas, 2013). According to a survey of master's students in Islamabad, excessive use of social media and technology has a negative impact on family life; 94% of students said that this has resulted in alienation and isolation from family members (Ali, 2016).

Islamic Perspectives on Family

The Quran, as the holy book of Islam, holds significant importance in shaping the religious and cultural heritage of Pakistan. It is regarded as a symbol of unity, guidance, and hope, and is an essential part of the country's religious and cultural practices (Khurshid, 2023). Pakistani Muslims have faith in that the Quran is the literal word of 'God', and they view it as a guide to life and a source of spiritual nourishment (ibid.).

The Quran offers timeless principles for governance, justice, and societal harmony, and its teachings emphasize the importance of family, compassion, and social responsibility (Ibid.). The Quranic teachings on family emphasize the importance of maintaining strong family ties, respecting elders, and fulfilling the

rights of family members.

"مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌّ شَيْخاً لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَيَّضَ اللهُ لَهُ مَنْ يُكْرِمَهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ "

"If a young pays respect to a person for his old age, Allah will appoint a person who would facilitate him in his old days." (Jami' al-Tirmidhi, Hadith # 22022.)

The Quran also guides marriage, parenting, and the treatment of children. For example, the Quran emphasizes the importance of kindness, compassion, and fairness in family relationships, and it encourages parents to provide love, care, and guidance to their children (Khurshid, 2023).

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

"Indeed, there is a good example for you in [the character of] the Messenger; [and] for those who have hope in God and the Last Day and remember God much." (33:21)

وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِين

"But it was our will to bestow our favor upon those [very people] that was deemed [so] utterly low in the land, and to make them forerunners in faith. and to make them heirs [to Pharaoh's glory]."

"Marriage is a component of my Sunnah," Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) remarked. "Whoever runs away from my path is not from among us." (Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, The Book of Marriage (Kitab-un-Nikah), Chapter 1, Hadith 1846). The institution of marriage, established by God, is fundamentally a contract, derived from the Arabic word 'aqd, and is referred to as the "Firm covenant" in Surah Nisa (4:21). The Quran refers to the creation of man and woman as "signs of God," emphasizing their harmonious, compassionate, and merciful marriage union,

وَمِنْ ءَايَٰتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَٰجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in this, there are signs for people who reflect." (Ar-Rome 30:21)

According to Ahmed (1974), family is a divine link that fosters love, tolerance, compassion, empathy, mutual understanding, identification, comfort, and moral support. It also creates an environment that is favorable for human identity and nourishes virtues like unity, empathy, and acceptance. A healthy and balanced society is thought to be built on the basis of the family, with the father serving as the head of the home and the mother and children coming in second and third, respectively (Evaion, 2016).

Using creative and critical thinking is crucial in decision-making, as Islam emphasizes considering everyone's needs and ensuring the best solutions benefit everyone. The leader bears all consequences of decisions, as per the Ḥadīth about responsibility.

"Abdullah ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family, and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children, and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master, and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock." (al-Bukhari, hadith, 6719, Muslim, hadith, 1829).

Participants of the family members should discuss the benefits they gained from decision-making, including time savings and avoiding mistakes. The first benefit was that the Islamic perspective can help make decisions more effectively. Prophet (PBUH) mentioned in *hadith*; *"One who is consulted is in a position of trust."* (At-Tirmidhī, 2007, *hadith*, 2822).

Pakistan's legal system also includes Sharia law, which is based on the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Khurshid, 2023). Islamic family law outlines the legal requirements and procedures for marriage, including age restrictions, consent protocols, and registration processes (Ahmed, 1974).

In Pakistani homes, new gadgets and communication methods have gained

popularity, and discussions over the benefits and drawbacks of digitalization for families are still going strong (Shahid; Tasgheer, 2021). Overall, the role of family in Islamic society is a complex and evolving issue, particularly in the context of generational shifts and the influence of traditional values, cultural norms, and religious teachings. The family is considered a fundamental unit of Islamic society, and its structure and dynamics are guided by Islamic principles. The joint family system, the patriarchal system, cultural and religious practices, and the impact of technology and digitalization are all important factors that shape the role of the family in Islamic society, particularly in the context of contemporary Pakistan.

Pakistan's joint family system embodies the shared culture and is viewed as a divinely inspired institution, with marriage at its core (Evason, 2016). It was also found that almost half of women are not empowered and lack participation in household decision-making (Lassi. at al. 2021). The study revealed that women's participation in decision-making is influenced by factors such as education, employment, and urban-rural residence (ibid.). Women who are educated, employed, and living in urban areas tend to have more say in household decisions (ibid.). In Pakistan, the concept of 'waste', or relationship-forming, has become a significant aspect of family dynamics, with people relying heavily on their relatives for financial, social, and employment opportunities (Evasion, 2016).

Families reinforce, contest, or negotiate the expectations of men and women in exclusive and changeable ways, and the pursuit of education and career prospects for women is often in conflict with the traditional expectations of prioritizing marital and household responsibilities (Chaudhary, 2022). In conclusion, Islamic perspectives on family dynamics in contemporary Pakistan can be explored through the lens of generational shifts, which are influenced by cultural norms, gender ideologies, and the traditional extended family system.

Islamic approaches to Contemporary Challenges

The traditional values of Pakistani families are influenced by cultural norms, gender ideologies, and the traditional extended family system. However, the changing cultural conditions and unstable concepts of Muslim, Islamophobia, and racialization in contemporary Pakistan influence the roles and expectations within the family structure, leading to generational shifts in family dynamics (Usman, 2011). The adaptation and interpretation of traditional values in contemporary Pakistan can be analyzed by examining how these values are being challenged and reinterpreted by younger generations. For example, the increasing prevalence of education, female employment, and changing gender roles is leading to a shift away from traditional patriarchal values and towards a more balanced approach to family dynamics (Chaudhary, 2022).

This shift is evident in the increasing number of women pursuing education and careers, and the growing acceptance of women's rights and gender equality in Pakistani society (ibid.). Moreover, the interpretation of traditional values in contemporary Pakistan is also influenced by Islamic teachings and principles. Islamic family law outlines the legal requirements and procedures for marriage, including age restrictions, consent protocols, and registration processes (Nauman, 2015).

The intersection of Islamic values and changing family dynamics in contemporary Pakistan is a complex and evolving area of study. Pakistani families often follow traditional religious and cultural practices, such as prayer, fasting during Ramadan, and participating in Eid celebrations, which serve to strengthen family bonds and pass on values to future generations (Khan, 2020). Marriage is considered a civil contract in Islam, and its validity depends on the capacity of the contracting parties. Islamic family law outlines the legal requirements and procedures for marriage, including age restrictions, consent protocols, and registration processes (Nauman, 2015).

The increasing popularity of new devices and

communication methods in Pakistani homes has sparked debates about the positive and negative impacts of digitalization on family life (Shahid; Tasgheer, 2021). The implications and challenges of generational shifts in the dynamics of family structure in contemporary Pakistan through an Islamic lens are complex and multifaceted. The traditional values, cultural norms, and religious teachings that shape the role of family in Islamic society are subject to ongoing debate and discussion, particularly in the context of changing cultural conditions and generational shifts (Ataullahjan, 2018).

Pakistani families often follow traditional religious and cultural practices, which can create challenges as younger generations seek to balance these practices with changing cultural and economic conditions (Shahid; Tashgeer, 2021). As for religion, "Islam is a total, all-embracing way of life for some Muslims, one that unifies metaphysical and materialistic dimensions. It includes both specific religious rituals and prayers, communicated through the words and commands of the prophet Mohammed and through the teachings of subsequent religious leaders" (Graham, Bradshaw & Trew, 2010, p. 339). Muslim parents are committed to ensuring their children understand and follow their religion, fearing it will be lost and not passed down from generation to generation, especially among South Asian Muslims (Zaidi et al., 2014, p. 33).

From an early age, Muslim parents instill in their children the five pillars of Islam, which include reading the Quran, fasting, and salah prayer, with each child's practise being determined by their own personal preferences. "While group belonging, whether religious or cultural, was quite important to the majority, it was always based on individual choice" (Ramji & Beyer, 2013). However, Many Muslim children face conflict between following Islam and adjusting to Western society, leading to their reconstruction of their own religious beliefs: As Ramji and Beyer (2013) assert from their findings, "The vast majority...insisted that their strong identity as Muslims should in no way hinder them from full participation in the surrounding society, whether this meant socially, culturally, politically, or in terms of profession."

Islam's West-Islam rivalry and conflicts are evolving due to technological innovations and cultural confrontations, despite suspicions from Western European and North American Christian societies Muslims establish religious and cultural enclaves using Arabsat, the Internet, and conventional means, while Western values are disseminated by satellite. Some Islamic intellectuals express ambivalence about shared discourse. This ambivalence extends to Muslims' complex feelings about their status as "co-citizens" in the West, suggesting a nuanced relationship with the host societies. At its most extreme, Islam's defensive stance is characterized as a strategic "holding operation against modernity," a term coined by Sivan in 1985 (p. 3). This implies a defensive posture aimed at preserving Islamic values amid the perceived challenges posed by modernity.

The cultural landscape of Pakistan reflects a rich tapestry of Islamic heritage and diverse influences, encompassing both Islamic and Western values. Shaped by historical, geographical, and socio-economic factors, Pakistan grapples with the interplay between these influences, sparking debates on cultural identity and progress. The discourse around the adoption of Western culture in Pakistan is multifaceted, with opinions ranging from concerns about the loss of traditional values to perspectives applauding progress and modernization. Due to differing worldviews, Muslims experience prejudice, intimidation, discrimination, misunderstanding, and hostility, which leaves them with emotional and psychological wounds as well as dissatisfaction: "frustration and dismay as they continue to experience prejudice, intimidation, discrimination, misunderstanding, and even hatred" (p. 3).

Crucially, the relationship between Islamic values and Western culture in Pakistan is not inherently adversarial. Despite differences, common ground exists, notably in areas like family values, social justice, and human rights. In essence, the interaction between Islamic values and Western cultural adoption in Pakistan

is a nuanced and intricate issue, requiring open-minded exploration of diverse perspectives and viewpoints for a comprehensive understanding (Palmer, 2001).

Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), A prominent Muslim scholar argued that Muslims are distancing themselves from the original message of Islam, indicating a decline in its influence.

"As such, Muslims became very weak and vulnerable. While Westerners were increasingly abandoning their traditional religious beliefs and values in favor of pervasive secularism, agnosticism, irreligious modernism and liberalism, Muslims were grappling with the task of reclaiming a collective identity, orientation and purpose. Trying to find their feet in the midst of emerging modern trends and phenomena, which were fanned by the notions of active westernization, imperialism and globalization, Muslims were consumed by the idea of a mere cultural and civilizational survival." (2018)

Numerous post-secularist scholars contend that their efforts are centred on reviving and examining an alternative mode of existence. They achieve this by highlighting the internalized subjectivities of Islamists, with a particular focus on Islamist Muslim women. However, this undertaking carries the potential hazard of inadvertently acclimatizing the patriarchal and nationalist agendas of Islamist men, especially within the context of Pakistan (Zia, 2017).

In post-9/11 Pakistan, there are humorous critiques made at those who are thought to hold "secular dreams" even among those who identify as left-progressive politicians (Akhtar 2016). In keeping with a historical pattern in which certain men from left-wing political groupings have disregarded or ignored Pakistani female movements, Akhtar makes a baseless generalisation to bolster his claim that secular goals are seen as elitist and detached dreams:

"Throughout the Zia period, the elite, as Hasan incisively and meticulously documents, was content to reside and thrive within its walled ghettoes, abandoning both public space and practical politics. In doing so, it effectively abandoned the struggle for cultural hegemony" (Akhtar 2016, 648).

The central argument of numerous restorative scholarly works on Muslim identities, particularly in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution in Iran, challenges the notion that "Islam" is a one and only factor that determines a Muslim's position and well-being. Even unexpected sources, like studies by the American Central Intelligence Agency, have acknowledged that Islam, in its development, has been entangled with and "coloured by the specific histories and socioeconomic circumstances that shape the lives of Muslim men" (Offenhauer 2005).

People should learn more about the topic and obtain reliable information in order to make well-informed decisions. These choices should be carefully studied in light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as they are founded on personal learning, wisdom, and experience. Gaining an understanding of Islamic principles and practises is essential for improving judgement and decision-making. To guarantee a healthy lifestyle, the community and the Muslim Ummah must be taken into account (Rahman, 2021).

Conclusion

This research has endeavoured to provide a comprehensive exploration of generational shifts within family structures in contemporary Pakistani society through the lens of Islam. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study delved into the intricate dynamics of family structures and the multifaceted influence of Islam on their evolution. The critical examination of the shifting cultural landscape and fluid concepts of Muslim identity, Islamophobia, and racialization has offered insightful perspectives within the context of contemporary Pakistan.

The findings shed light on generational tensions and solidarity within advanced welfare states, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in family structures influenced by Islam. The research has made a scholarly contribution by enriching our

comprehension of evolving family dynamics and emphasizing the pivotal role of Islam in shaping familial structures in contemporary Pakistan.

As Pakistan stands at the intersection of tradition and modernity, the research underscores the importance of acknowledging the country's rich Islamic heritage and diverse cultural landscape. The evolving relationship between Islamic values and Western influences has been highlighted, emphasizing the need for a nuanced perspective that recognizes both the unique blend of values and the challenges posed by cultural shifts.

In conclusion, the study advocates for an open-minded approach to navigating the complexities of generational shifts within Pakistani families, recognizing the multifaceted interplay of Islamic principles, cultural dynamics, and global influences. The exploration of family structures in this context serves not only to expand academic understanding but also to provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to engage with the evolving socio-cultural fabric of contemporary Pakistan.

Recommendations:

Based on the exploration of generational shifts in the dynamics of family structure in contemporary Pakistan through an Islamic lens, the following recommendations can be made to address the challenges faced by families and promote harmonious family relationships:

- Encourage education and career opportunities for women, particularly those who are married or have children. This can help challenge traditional patriarchal values and promote a more balanced approach to family dynamics.

- Encourage open communication and mutual respect between different generations within families. This can help bridge generational gaps and promote understanding and support.

- Recognize the potential benefits of technology and digitalization in family life, such as improved communication and access to information. Develop strategies to harness these tools positively, ensuring that they strengthen family bonds and promote harmonious relationships

- Use education as a tool to promote cultural sensitivity and understanding. By teaching about the intersection of Islamic values and changing family dynamics, families can develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage and navigate the challenges of generational shifts in family structures.

By implementing these recommendations, families can better adapt to the changing cultural and economic conditions, maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity while promoting harmonious relationships and a strong family structure.

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