

Parental Perceptions of Disciplinary Practices in *Deeni Madaris*: A Qualitative Study from District Orakzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Discipline in schools is still a very controversial issue because it has a great impact on children's behaviour development, personality and educational outcomes. The disciplinary practices and corporal punishment in formal education have been extensively studied, but little is known about the parents' perceptions of discipline in *Deeni Madaris*, especially in tribal areas of Pakistan. A qualitative exploratory design was used in the study to explore parents' perspectives on the use of discipline in these religious institutions. Purposive sampling was done and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents of 18 Nazira students studying at *Deeni Madaris*. The results indicated that parents generally considered disciplinary practices as important to reinforce religious knowledge, to develop respect for the teacher and peers, to develop self-control and responsibility, and to develop moral and religious values. Such practices, they thought, would strengthen students' commitment to religious education and prepare them to live according to Islamic principles. However, there were also worries regarding the severity of the punishment as well as the worry and fear of enforcing too severe discipline. They stressed the need for a more kid-friendly, compassionate, and guiding approach while upholding the required discipline to safeguard the children's emotions. According to the study, there is a need to strike a balance between *Deeni Madaris's* religious disciplinary measures and its children's positive upbringing.

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Introduction

Discipline has always been considered a central aspect of the development of children, educationally, morally and socially. In schools and other learning situations it is used not only to keep order but also to develop in young people self-control, a sense of responsibility, respect for authority and behaviour that is accepted by society. Discipline is an important part of child-rearing. Parents and teachers often regard it as essential, because it has a bearing not only on children's learning, but also on their character. However, the way in which it is enforced is highly debated, especially when it involves physical force or other punitive measures (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016).

Corporal punishment is generally defined as the intentional infliction of physical force with the intention of causing pain or discomfort to change child behaviour. For generations, this was a widely accepted form of legitimate discipline of children in many societies (Veriava & Power,

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2017). Its proponents say it promotes obedience and helps discourage unwanted behaviour. However, a significant body of international research has associated it with a variety of negative outcomes, including increased aggression, anxiety, fear, depression, lower self-esteem, poorer academic performance and strained relationships between children and the adults who care for them (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heilmann et al., 2021). This has led many countries' education systems to move towards positive, non-violent approaches based on guidance, communication and support instead of physical punishment.

This pattern is found in many countries, but ideas about discipline are still heavily influenced by cultural, religious and social beliefs. In many collectivist societies, discipline is still seen as a means of instilling respect, obedience and a sense of responsibility. Many parents see it as more than just reacting to bad behaviour; they see it as a fundamental part of creating a child's moral character and preparing them to be responsible members of their community (Durrant & Ensom, 2017). Such attitudes are particularly widespread in countries where children are still brought up in the environment of religious dogmas and cultural stereotypes.

Discipline plays a fundamental role in the functioning of every family and school in Pakistan. The country's law prohibits corporal punishment in schools as a way of protecting children against physical violence. At the same time, the majority of cultures regard discipline as an essential element of a proper upbringing. Previous studies have demonstrated the pervasiveness of corporal punishment in schools, which is practised for the child's own good and according to a person's social expectations, parental attitudes, and religious guidance (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2024). Therefore, the issue of discipline in schools cannot be considered purely from the legal perspective but should be evaluated from the viewpoint of parenting styles, religion, education, and sociology.

Deeni Madaris are unique in this regard since they have been existing for centuries as religious educational institutions aimed at providing knowledge about the Qur'an, morality, and Islamic science or preserving Muslim scholarship. Therefore, their main goal is to teach students to be religious and moral, disciplined and respectful, and modest and obedient. Hence, the role of a teacher in *Deeni Madaris* is different since he must also act as a spiritual authority, guiding students in terms of developing their religious identities and moral values (Haq et al., 2025; Jakhriani & Sultana, 2024). Accordingly, the discipline in such educational settings is regarded as something that contrasts significantly with the traditional school environment and the expectations of teachers there.

District Orakzai is a good choice to base the research on. It is a region with a strong religious culture and tribal structure, and social values. Respect for elders, obedience and moral behaviour are greatly valued. Such cultural features are likely to influence parental perceptions of discipline and assessment of practices used in *Deeni Madaris*. Studying parental perceptions in this context thus provides useful insight into the interaction of religious beliefs, cultural traditions, educational expectations and child-rearing practices.

In this context, the current study qualitatively investigates the perceptions and rationales of parents of disciplinary practices in *Deeni Madaris* in District Orakzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study adds to the scarce literature on religious education and child discipline in Pakistan through exploring the lived experiences and views of parents. The findings are expected to inform educators, policy makers, Madaris administrators, child protection practitioners and social work professionals seeking to promote disciplinary approaches that are respectful of local religious and cultural values while safeguarding children's wellbeing and rights.

Literature Review

In educational settings, disciplinary practices have long been identified as an important factor influencing children's behavioural development, emotional well-being, academic performance, and socialisation. Schools and religious educational institutions employ various disciplinary approaches to maintain order, encourage moral behaviour, and facilitate learning. In general, these approaches range from positive and rehabilitative approaches such as counselling, praise and reinforcement to punitive approaches such as verbal reprimands and corporal punishment (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Contemporary educational institutions are beginning to embrace positive discipline as it allows for self-control, respect, and adaptability, while also reducing negative side effects such as fear and resentment (UNICEF, 2021).

Parental attitudes towards discipline are a major influence in the shaping and justification of practices used in schools. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) posits that the development of a child is influenced by the interaction of various environments, particularly the home and the school. Cultural values and religious norms, parents' own experience, and broader social expectations shape parents' views on discipline and can influence whether they accept or reject school-based disciplinary practices (Bornstein, 2012). Research shows that parents are more likely to cooperate and endorse institutional policies when disciplinary measures are seen as just, respectful, and pedagogically constructive (Epstein, 2018). However, negative perceptions of parents can negatively affect trust in educational institutions and parent-school partnerships.

This is a clear international trend, but attitudes to discipline are still heavily influenced by cultural, religious and social values. In many collectivist societies, much of the discipline is still viewed as necessary to teach respect, obedience and responsibility. Although parents perceive it as a reaction to misbehaviour, it goes beyond that. In order to prepare children to be responsible members of their societies, this is an essential component of moral and character development (Durrant & Ensom, 2017). These are particularly common in areas where traditional cultural practices and religious beliefs impact childrearing.

Although corporal punishment has been condemned globally, regional cultural and religious factors influence the perception of corporal punishment in different regions of the world. In several South Asian countries such as Pakistan, corporal punishment has been practised for centuries as a mechanism of training and disciplining children so that they can learn obedience and respect (Holden et al., 2014). Corporal punishment, when administered by responsible teachers and religious leaders, is practised and viewed as a positive intervention to encourage conformity to religious doctrines and societal values. This is achieved through the generational transmission of knowledge, collective cultural practices, and community socialisation to uphold conformity to communal norms and promote good parenting. However, contemporary legal reforms, children's rights movements and the growing body of empirical literature on learner-centred approaches have challenged these long-standing perceptions about corporal punishment.

The problem of school corporal punishment has been widely studied in both private and public education systems of Pakistan. Even though recent provincial child-protection legislation now officially forbids it, corporal punishment remains prevalent (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2024). The issue of corporal punishment in schools is directly related to teacher discipline practices. The researchers found that corporal punishments are used in schools because of large class sizes, insufficient pedagogical training, and cultural beliefs about severe punishments (Abbas et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020). But at the same time, many parents still allow or even endorse stern disciplinary measures, believing they contribute to academic

success and moral upbringing. However, there is evidence of a shift towards non-violent disciplinary methods fostering communication, counselling and positive reinforcement among younger and more educated parents (UNICEF Pakistan, 2022).

Deeni Madaris have a unique status in the education system of Pakistan as they provide religious education as well as moral and character education. These institutions have the trust of many communities, particularly in rural and tribal areas where they are often a hub for education and religion. Discipline in *Deeni Madaris* is usually seen as an important aspect of religious education to inculcate obedience, respect for teachers, spiritual commitment and adherence to Islamic values (Rahman, 2004). Thus, teachers are often given a lot of leeway in dealing with children, reflecting a strong cultural and religious trust in such institutions.

Empirical studies on the practice of discipline in *Deeni Madaris*, however, are scarce. Most of the existing studies have been on curriculum, religious education, educational reforms and security-related issues, and parental perceptions of disciplinary practices have not received much attention from scholars (Bano, 2012; Fair, 2014). The few studies conducted on the subject show that disciplinary practices vary from school to school depending on the customs within each facility, the leadership qualities of the teachers, and the general attitude of the community towards such activities. For some families, discipline is a necessity, an attribute that is part of spiritual and moral education and forms strong Islamic faith. In other groups, such practices as hard punishment have negative effects, and because of that, they have been excluded from the curriculum. However, such subtle differences in opinions are not often found in the qualitative studies where people tell their stories and explain their views in detail.

The knowledge gap is even more conspicuous in the tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, of which District Orakzai is a part. The area is characterised by its unique socio-cultural features, including tribal values and social norms, patriarchal religion, and a lack of educational opportunities, which were aggravated by administrative reforms in the region that placed former FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) under the jurisdiction of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These cultural and administrative features may have a considerable impact on parents' views on disciplinary practices in *Deeni Madaris* (religious seminaries). However, there is a limited amount of information on parents' views on the specific aspects of discipline, including their recognition or otherwise of various disciplinary measures, their adherence to religious doctrines, and attempts to reconcile their socio-cultural values with children's rights.

For these reasons, the current qualitative study aims to contribute to a better understanding of parents' views on disciplinary practices in *Deeni Madaris* in District Orakzai by focusing on their attitudes and beliefs. This study complements the existing body of scholarly research on educational discipline, religious education, and children's rights in Pakistan and provides policymakers, Madaris administration, teachers, and child protection agencies with evidence-based recommendations and guidelines for developing child-friendly disciplinary policies that would respect socio-cultural norms and the educational mission of *Deeni Madaris*.

Research Questions

1. How do parents view the disciplinary actions applied in *Deeni Madaris* of district Orakzai, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa?
2. How do parents negotiate religious and cultural expectations with children's emotional well-being and rights?

Research Objectives

1. To ascertain parents' perceptions and justifications of discipline in *Deeni Madaris* in District Orakzai
2. To identify how parents negotiate religious doctrines, cultural beliefs and children's rights in *Deeni Madaris*.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), providing an insight into children's rearing processes within diverse systems. The theory highlights the importance of the environment, both inner and outer, in shaping individuals' attitudes, behaviour, and moral principles. From this perspective, children's attitudes are determined by their family, education, social network, culture, and other factors, which, in turn, are influenced by their parents' social and professional backgrounds.

In relation to *Deeni Madaris*, it is possible to suggest that children's discipline is determined by diverse factors beyond teachers' authority, namely parents, Muslim religious authorities, cultural background, and local community. Bronfenbrenner's model includes several levels of analysis of the children's rearing process. The microsystem level refers to the child's immediate surroundings, such as parents, teachers, and peers. In the case of the *Deeni Madaris*, the microsystem level involves such influential agents as parents, *Ustad* (teachers), and students. The mesosystem level highlights the interrelations between various elements within the microsystem. For example, parents' interaction with teachers may affect children's discipline in terms of mutual understanding and support. In turn, the exosystem level refers to external to the child's environment and includes such sources of influence as child protection agencies, government, media, and parents' workplace. Finally, the macrosystem level denotes the cultural and social influences, such as religious beliefs, social norms, cultural traditions, and national attitudes towards parenting.

By applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, it is possible to comprehend the relationship between *Deeni Madaris* students' discipline and parents' attitudes from a holistic perspective. Indeed, the theory demonstrates that parents' views are formed by social and cultural factors, outlining their general attitude towards children's discipline. It may be suggested that the study's framework helps to discover parents' perception of children's discipline, taking into account their cultural background and religious beliefs in relation to the *Deeni Madaris*.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted an exploratory research design within a qualitative paradigm. An exploratory research design was considered appropriate for this study mainly because this study aimed at exploring the parents' perceptions of discipline in *Deeni Madaris* of Orakzai District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A qualitative research design was considered appropriate because a researcher can comprehend the experiences, perceptions, and views of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, there are limited studies that explored parents' perceptions of discipline in *Deeni Madaris*; hence, an exploratory research design was considered appropriate to generate more in-depth information and understanding of the phenomenon.

Study Area

The research study was conducted in District Orakzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. District Orakzai is one of the comparatively less developed districts of Pakistan in terms of literacy rate, education, and development. People of Orakzai are mostly tribal and religious and prefer *Deeni Madaris* for their children's education. Therefore, this area was selected as a sample because of the availability of *Deeni Madaris* and parental preference toward them.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved parents of the children admitted to Nazira classes of *Deeni Madaris* in District Orakzai. Purposive sampling was employed to target those respondents who had at least some knowledge or experience concerning the disciplinary measures in the selected institutes. The inclusion criterion was based on parents' involvement in their children's education in Nazira classes, since they are the ones who typically make a choice to enroll the child in any educational institution or Madaris in particular. The data collection proceeded with an aim to reach saturation, which is described as a point when nothing substantially new emerges (Guest et al., 2020). It should be noted that saturation was achieved after completing eighteen parent interviews.

Inclusion Criteria

It includes;

Parents (father or mother) of children studying in Nazira classes at the *Deeni Madaris* resident of District Orakzai and whose age is 18 years or above. They must have adequate knowledge of disciplinary practices being used in the respective Madaris and be willing to participate voluntarily and be able to communicate effectively in Urdu or Pashto language. Parents who did not fulfil the above requirements were excluded from the study.

Data Collection

The researchers carried out face-to-face semi-structured interviews with study participants. The research question and literature review guided the interview guide design and determined the questions' nature and direction. Open-ended questions invited participants to express their views and share their experiences and thoughts on the topic. The interviews were held in either Urdu or Pashto, depending on the participants' choice and took 30-45 minutes each. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to document non-verbal data, including facial expressions and body language. The data collection process continued until saturation was reached.

Data Analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated if needed while maintaining the meaning. The thematic analysis procedure by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2021) was applied to the transcripts. The steps included in the analysis process are as follows:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Initial coding
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Finalizing the report

The extracted codes were organised into broader categories on the basis of their similarities to form major themes. The verbatim quotes from the participants were included to demonstrate the validity of the results. Additionally, the analysis was conducted using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to interpret how the family, education, culture, and religion influenced the participants' perspectives of parental discipline.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were maintained during the study. Before collecting data from participants, they were informed about the research objectives, voluntary nature of their involvement, and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any negative consequences. Likewise, before conducting interviews, each participant gave informed consent to participate in the study. Moreover, when analysing the results and writing the report, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by removing all identifying information and replacing it with pseudonyms. In turn, the information that participants provided was used for research and educational purposes only and was protected in accordance with privacy regulations. Moreover, during the research process, participants' dignity, cultural values, and beliefs were respected.

Findings

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four themes that emerged from the participants' responses. The themes were related to the perceptions of parents about discipline in *Deeni Madaris* that emerged during the interviews. The four themes were: 1. Discipline as religious duty and obligation, 2. Discipline according to culture and traditions, 3. Parents' concern about child's rights and feelings, and 4. Synthesis of religious beliefs and child's rights. Each theme is discussed below with excerpts from the participants' interviews.

Theme 1: Discipline as Religious Duties and Responsibilities

The respondents acknowledged that a disciplined approach to children was part of *Deeni Madaris* education and religious obligations. It was interesting to note that parents associated the role of Ustad (teacher) with transmission of religious knowledge as well as good character and conduct. According to the respondents, discipline was necessary for the child to develop obedience and respect for the teachers and for promoting Islamic values.

"I see discipline as our religious obligation to make our child a good Muslim. The ustad (teacher) is not only teaching our child to read and write the Koran but is making him a good Muslim. The child needs to be respectful and obedient; otherwise, we cannot accomplish our objective of making him a good Muslim. In the Koran and the Sunnah, there is a lot about adab [manners]; therefore, I do not want my child to learn only the words of God but also to learn and understand the meaning and message behind them." (Parent 3, Father)

A mother connected discipline with the spiritual purpose of Nazira education.

"If the child goes to the Nazira, we want him to become a hafiz or at least learn the Koran and recite it well. We think that discipline is important to reinforce good behaviour and religious duties, like fasting or prayers. Discipline helps to develop taqwa

[piety]. If you do not discipline your child, he will just fool around, and the whole exercise of sending him to Nazira is wasted." (Parent 7, Mother)

Both parents are echoing the general tone sent out by the literature on discipline in the *Deeni Madaris* system in Pakistan. The latter views discipline in the religious schools as not only a pedagogical issue but more importantly as a way of imparting moral values to students using the religious beliefs and doctrines (Rahman, 2004; Haq et al., 2025)

Theme 2: Discipline According to Culture and Traditions

Most respondents related the issue of discipline to cultural and traditional background. They asserted that in their district, children are brought up to respect the elders and follow their directions without questioning. Discipline practised by the teachers in Madaris had always been in line with traditional child-rearing methods. A father stated:

"In this area our children are brought up to respect elders and the teachers. The same way is followed in the Madarsa also. A little slap or warning is a part of our culture. It does not mean that the teacher is harsh, but rather he cares for the child as our fathers and grandfathers cared for us." (Parent 11-Father).

A child's father spoke about the need to continue local upbringing traditions:

"Our culture teaches that a child that is not corrected becomes spoilt. In the Madrasa the same applies. When the Ustad (teacher) thrashes the child, we feel that he is assisting us at home. It is not foreign to us; it is our own way of child raising." (Parent 2, Father)

These themes provide evidence that macrosystemic cultural and tribal norms are powerful predictors of parental attitudes towards institutional discipline in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and findings of previous research on institutional child rearing practices among South Asian communities (Durrant & Ensom, 2017; Holden et al., 2014).

Theme 3: Parents' Concerns about Children's Rights and Feelings

Even though most parents support the concept of discipline, there were some concerns about being too strict or using harsh methods that could frighten or offend children and cause their emotional trauma and loss of interest in religion. A mother stated:

"I support a disciplined system, but sometimes the teachers are too strict. My son came back one day with some marks on his hand and was crying that he was scared to go to the madarsa. I told the Ustad (teacher) that you cannot beat the child but have to make him understand things with sympathy so that the child should not hate the Madarsa or the Qur'an due to you." (Parent 9, Father)

One father talked about a dilemma of using time-tested traditional ways of motivating students and modern child psychology:

"We grew used to being strict with them, and now there is no need for it as times are changing. Children are becoming more sensitive, and if you punish them too strictly, they might start feeling scared, and respect will not be achieved by means of terror."

Children need to be disciplined but not humiliated and broken in such a way that they feel that they are not worthy,” (Parent 15, Father)

These concerns were echoed in international research demonstrating negative emotional consequences of corporal punishment (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heilmann et al., 2021), while in local contexts, even the most conservative segments of the population are witnessing an increasing acceptance of children’s rights (UNICEF Pakistan, 2022).

Theme 4: Synthesis of Religious Beliefs and Children’s Rights

The last theme was about parents’ desire to balance the strict religious and cultural beliefs concerning raising strong-minded and obedient children and their understanding of children’s needs for comfort and respect for their rights. Most parents stated that they tried to raise their children using a reasonable approach that would still keep the principles of strict discipline but would not spoil children’s spirits.

One father expressed his views on the matter as follows:

“Islam calls for being kind as well as firm. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was very merciful with children. Therefore, in the Madarsa there should be disciplined to teach the children about respect and responsibility, but it should be with hikmah [wisdom] and not by being harsh, so that the child’s heart remains open to the teacher and to religion.” (Parent 5, Father)

Another parent, a mother, expressed a similar opinion:

“We want our children to be good Muslims that respect teachers and follow the Islamic teachings. That’s why in madrassa there should be some discipline.” (Parent 14, Mother)

These testimonials illustrate parents’ negotiations of religious doctrines as well as tribal norms and children’s rights, which is exactly what the author intended to demonstrate using Bronfenbrenner’s ecological framework.

In general, the collected evidence suggests that the majority of parents in District Orakzai view *Deeni Madaris* discipline as religiously and culturally appropriate, although some report experiencing excessive harshness from teachers and intend to limit their children’s education at such institutions. Overall, the testimonials suggest that there is a need for greater consideration of children’s emotional needs in the context of cultural expectations and religious beliefs. In particular, the research evidence suggests that it is possible to establish discipline in *Deeni Madaris* that would comply with its religious goals while reducing its negative impact on students.

Discussion

The present qualitative study aimed to explore parents’ perceptions of disciplinary practice in *Deeni Madaris* of District Orakzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The four themes extracted from the study were discipline as a religious duty and obligation, discipline on the basis of culture and traditions, parents’ concerns about children’s rights, and the combination of religious beliefs

and children's rights. These themes highlighted parents' views of the need to impose strict discipline due to religious beliefs and cultural traditions while considering their child's feelings and addressing their concerns about the infringement of their children's rights.

Parents were primarily concerned about the disciplinary measure as a constituent part of religious teachings and not a control mechanism for children's unruly behavior. The *Ustad* (teacher) was expected to instruct children in the Qur'an and develop in them the Islamic concepts of adab, obedience, and taqwa. The study's findings tie in with previous research on the pedagogical practices in the Madaris that emphasise the relevance of disciplinary measures for inculcating Islamic identities and values among children (Rahman, 2004; Haq et al., 2025). Moreover, the results are in agreement with the previous research on collectivist-based and religion-based parenting practices, where parents tend to view disapproval as a moral duty and not a means of punishment (Durrant & Ensom, 2017).

The second theme that emerged from the study was the prevalence of tribal and Pashtun cultural norms. In particular, participants indicated that the discipline practised in Madaris was an extension of local child-raising norms, which emphasise the need to respect elders and embrace hierarchical relationships. At a macrosystem level, this theme reflects Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which connects cultural norms with parenting practices, which in turn shape child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similar themes can be found in the parenting literature concerning South Asia, where corporal punishment and strict discipline have been traditional methods of raising children and passing cultural values to them (Holden et al., 2014).

At the same time, a considerable number of parents were concerned about overly strict measures, which were feared to have negative consequences such as traumatising children or instilling a dislike for religion and learning in general. The potential of corporal punishment to undermine positive parent-child relationships has also been widely documented in scientific research (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heilmann et al., 2021). This hesitation is typical of the more progressive part of the community, and the fact that such voices are heard in a conservative tribal region indicates a certain level of liberalisation, which can also be seen in the tendency towards non-violence in child upbringing in Pakistani society (UNICEF Pakistan, 2022).

The fourth theme, which refers to the effort of parents to balance religious-cultural expectations and children's rights, was the most interesting finding of this study. The study revealed that the participants did not negate the need for discipline. However, they argued the need for a balanced approach that is based on hikmah and care, which is consistent with the prophetic approach to children. The balancing act that the parents attempt to perform reflects their ability to operate within various levels of the ecological system, including the microsystem (home-Madarsa), mesosystem (parents-teacher), and macrosystem (religious-cultural values). Besides addressing the second research question, this theme also explains how parents can meet religious-cultural expectations while respecting their children's needs and rights.

These results have several implications for both the practice and research areas. For the Madaris administrators and teachers, these results suggest that a wide range of disciplinary strategies that would strive to balance the moral and religious aims of Madaris while reducing negative emotional outcomes would be most effective. Training programs that would promote positive behavioral influences and address the Islamic perspectives on discipline would be beneficial in this case. For the policymakers and other child protection agencies, the research results indicate that culturally and religiously informed strategies are most needed in cases involving strict cultural or religious norms. Banning certain practices without addressing their

meaning to the local community may cause negative consequences such as resistance to authorities. For social workers and teachers working in tribal districts, the parent feedback indicating a desire to balance is an opportunity to educate these stakeholders on the benefits of positive disciplinary strategies.

The limitations of this study should be noted. Firstly, the results are only applicable within the context of the district and parents of Nazira students; they cannot be generalised to other areas, levels of Madaris education, teachers' perspectives, administrators' views, or children's attitudes. Secondly, the study has an exploratory nature, so the data do not establish a causal link. Further studies should include multiple stakeholders in the research process, assess different levels of education, and evaluate the effectiveness of positive discipline strategies adjusted to cultural contexts.

Conclusions

In conclusion, based on the findings of this qualitative study, it can be assumed that the majority of parents of Nazira students in *Deeni Madaris* in the District Orakzai view discipline as something religiously and culturally obligatory to ensure children develop Islamic beliefs, respect towards teachers, self-discipline, and sound character, although perceiving its imposition as excessively strict as a source of fear, anxiety, and alienation from Islam; thus, balancing between their own expectations and child rights, they call for adopting a reasonable and humane approach to discipline to ensure that the goals of Nazira Madaris are achieved without damaging the well-being and self-esteem of their children, implying that culturally and religiously sensitive policies should be developed to guide the use of disciplinary measures in these institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, here are a few suggested recommendations.

1. *Deeni Madaris* Administrators should formulate written disciplinary guidelines that stress guidance and counselling and are consistent with the Islamic spirit of mercy and wisdom (hikmah).
2. Organise refresher courses for Ustad (teachers) on positive and non-violent discipline and management of children that combine Prophetic teachings with modern child psychology.
3. Initiate regular parent-*Madarsa* meetings and awareness campaigns to enable parents and teachers to share and negotiate discipline-related concerns and reduce severity in punishment.
4. Policymakers and provincial education/renewal departments should develop child-friendly and culturally sensitive child-protection guidelines for *Deeni Madaris* that prohibit severe punishments.
5. Develop formal structures such as suggestion boxes to enable free reporting by students and parents to *Madarsa* authorities if they feel that they have been over-punished or unfairly disciplined or disciplined.
6. Social workers and child-protection personnel working at tribal agencies should organise community awareness campaigns to sensitise parents and teachers in the target communities to positive forms of discipline within an Islamic framework.
7. Curriculum planners and *Madarsa* boards should include child psychology and management modules in the training syllabus for teachers at the *Wafaqs* and other formal teacher-training institutions.

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