

**PERCEIVED ROLE OF A SHI'A-LED  
INSTITUTE IN LABOR FORCE  
PARTICIPATION IN ISLAMABAD**



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**CERTIFICATE**

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### Author's Declaration

I, Fatima Hasnain, hereby state that my MPhil thesis titled Perceived Role of a Shi'a-Led Institute in Labor Force Participation in Islamabad is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation the university has the right to withdraw my MPhil degree.

Date: April 14, 2022

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Fatima Hasnain

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## ABSTRACT

This study employed a qualitative approach and aimed to explore the perceptions of the graduates of a Shi'a-led religious institute Jamia tu Al-Kauthar regarding their relevance to the contemporary labor market. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the study found that the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in labor force participation was somehow positive in the sense that the graduates were satisfied with the skills and knowledge they gained from it. But since they worked as teachers, they contended that their knowledge and curriculum was not suitable to work in the regular labor market and professions other than religious teaching. Hence, it is necessary to focus on policy and policy implementation to mainstream religious educational institutes, and improve the overall rate of labor force participation of Pakistan. The findings of this study rejected the theories applied as the conceptual framework. The Jamia tu Al-Kauthar was found to be “*non-isomorphic*” as it took up the necessary qualities to align with its peers, however it also added enhancing features that were not present in other Madaris according to the respondents. Furthermore, the institute exhibited “*tight coupling*” with the technical efficiency and practical skills, as it was found to deliver practical skills such as computer-operations, online technology, digital skills, spoken-English skills, teaching and research skills, and problem-solving abilities. The institute was mobilized by the need of technical efficiency. Hence, the institute was not found to be compliant with Meyer’s Institutional Theory. Moreover, the respondents of this study were more likely to perceive prejudice than relative deprivation among people belonging to religious groups other than the Shi’a sect. Hence, it was deduced that the respondents of this study did not perceive relative deprivation in terms of wages or social interaction due to their religious identity. However, this study is an indicative study and cannot be generalized. This calls for more primary research over the topic to explore the gaps and recommend policy inclusion. Policy recommendations are majorly for the Government stakeholders controlling the Wafaq ul Madaris, under which the institute is registered. The degree issued by the Wafaq is not acceptable for regular jobs, however their credit hours are still as much as required by HEC. The respondents of the study recommended that the Wafaq resolve the issue with the Government and make their degrees equivalent to MPhil and PhD according to the credit hours covered. Also, the Madrassa Board must allocate quotas for Madrassa students in public sector jobs, and have affiliations with conventional educational institutions to enhance industry linkages.

**Keywords:** Religious education; Labor Force Participation; Qualitative Research

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

HEC	Higher Education Commission
MOFEPT	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training
NEP	National Education Policy
REI	Religious Educational Institution
RDT	Relative Deprivation Theory
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a nation with diverse range of cultures, religions, languages and ethnicities; a variety of cultures bring different belief sets along. Although the Constitution of Pakistan is framed under the Islamic ideology, nonetheless other religious minorities are accommodated in the country's law and order, education systems, cultural sets, and practice of rituals (Mehfooz, 2021). Simultaneously, religious diversity dwells in the country within the Islamic religion as well. According to the World Bank (2019), Pakistan's total population is calculated to be 216 million as of 2019. According to a report in 2002, out of the total population, it is estimated that 96% are Muslims (hence the majority), almost 3% are Christians and Hindus and the remaining less than 1% comprise of Ahmadis, Parsis, Buddhists, Sikhs, and other religious minorities. However, within the religion of Islam there are two major school of thoughts i.e. Sunni and Shi'a. Pakistan comprising of Muslims mostly, has a majority of people belonging to Sunni school of thought and about 15 to 20 per cent of the Muslims belonging to the Shi'a-Islamic sect (Malik, 2002).

In a state with existence of various religious, racial and ethnic identities, equity of opportunities can be a challenge in every aspect of life. One of such opportunities that play a pivotal role in the lives of people is seeking reasonable employment, as it cross-cuts every aspect of a person's life. Current job market requires more than just a high-school degree, which is why an increasing number of students go for additional educational degrees or vocational trainings to make themselves compatible for the labor market (Robson, 2013b). This means that education is an imperative step towards the ladder of professional success. To educate an individual, schools and educational institutions serve as catalysts and agents to impart the desired training. They prepare the foundation on which an individual can build his/her further educational or professional structure. Considering that one of the main purposes of these institutions is to prepare the individual for the practical labor market by providing a set of soft skills—leadership, communication, networking, critical thinking skills etc. – the role of educational institutes carrying a certain minority religious identity can be challenging in a religious state.

Religious discrimination in the workplace refers to a different treatment due to affiliation with certain religious group(s). Such type of discrimination includes hiring behavior or employment

decision with a religious preference, harassment due to specific religious affiliation, and/or not accommodating on religious grounds (Workplace Fairness, 2021). It may also include commenting on traditional or religious attire, firing from—or promoting to—a post due to affiliation with certain religious group, and/or considering religious events while scheduling important meetings or other official activities (Messarra, 2014, p. 61). When a person or a group thinks that they are being, or might be, treated differently (in other words, unfairly) due to their affiliation with a specific community or trait, it is commonly referred to as ‘perceived discrimination’ (Sanchez & Brock, 1996).

Research in Senegal also highlights that reforms in higher education led to increased labor force participation (Boccanfuso, Larouche, & Trandafir, 2015). However, in Pakistan, data on the perceived discrimination and/or empowerment of workers based on their affiliation with a minority religious sect in Pakistan is not widely available. This data may enable the policymakers to improve Pakistan’s labor force participation with the help of minority-sensitive policies. In this study we specifically focus on the enablers and constraints for graduates of Shi’a-led institute (Jamia tu Al-Kauthar) in their participation in the labor force.

The current study is twofold in its objectives. Firstly, it explores if the knowledge imparted to the Al-Kauthar graduates, during their academic tenure at the institute, are *perceived* by those graduates to be helpful for them to compete in the labor force market. This part focuses on the perceptions of these graduates regarding the role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in imparting knowledge that helped them later in labor force participation. Secondly, it explores the *perceived* role/impact of the religious identity of Al-Kauthar graduates in their employment (i.e. labor force participation). This section explores the perceptions of these graduates of how they felt their religious identity played a role in their employment(s)—whether they perceived to be discriminated or accommodated due to their affiliation with the Shi’a sect and, most importantly, with a faith-based/religious institute. The results of this study are specified according to the perspectives of a defined group of graduates from a Shi’a-led educational institute in Islamabad – Jamia tu Al-Kauthar— a principal Shi’a-led Islamic university in Pakistan.

## **1.1 Statement of Problem**

In Pakistan, religious discrimination at workplace has been reported in various forms (Agenzia Fides, 2017). However, not much literature could be traced highlighting the trends of the Shi'a community on availing economic opportunities in Pakistan.

Considering that the Shi'a population holds the highest aggregate within the minority groups of Pakistan, highlighting the trends in their recruitment into the economic force is significant. Therefore, this study focuses on the perceptions of the graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar institute regarding the application of knowledge imparted to them during their studies in their practical occupations. The objective of this study focuses on their perceptions about the role that Al-Kauthar institute plays in making easier for them to participate in the job market.

This research also focuses on the perceptions of the graduates regarding the trends they notice in affiliation with Jamia tu Al-Kauthar while also being an active player in the job market. The graduates were open-endedly questioned about their thoughts, whether they felt more empowered after graduating from a Shi'a-led institute, more opportunities came their way in the practical world, or did they face discrimination in the workforce due to having the academic stamp of an institute led by a religious sect.

Moreover, this research also recommends areas to cover in future research, such as perceptions of employers regarding the difference in competencies of respective graduates of faith-based educational institutes and a regular educational institute.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the narrative of SoP as stated in the preceding text, I am narrowing my research problem into "Perceived Role of a Shi'a-led Institute in Labor Force Participation in Islamabad" and have operationalized my topic into following research questions and objectives.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in providing adequate knowledge to its graduates, required to compete in the labor force market?

Review of literature has lime-lighted the importance of the role of the educational institutes in preparing and training the students for labor force participation after graduation. Since Jamia tu Al-Kauthar is a faith-centered educational institute, this research question will help in assessing its role in imparting necessary knowledge to the graduated students to compete in the labor force market.

2. What is the perceived impact of Al-Kauthar graduates' religious identity and affiliation with the Al-Kauthar institute on their employment (i.e., labor force participation)?

As shown in the literature, Pakistan is a Sunni Muslim majority state. Considering Shi'a Muslims as a relative minority, this question will explore the impact of being affiliated with the Shi'a sect as well as with a Shi'a led educational institute on the employment opportunities sought by the students graduated from this institute.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- To explore the *perceived* role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in participation of Jamia graduates in the labor force market

Through covering this objective, this study traces the contributions of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in the economic sector. Furthermore, it informs the researchers to explore other dimensions of the role of "religious educational institutions" in the development of Pakistan, such as human capital.

- To explore the *perceived* role of the religious identity of Al-Kauthar graduates in their employment (i.e., labor force participation)

This study documents whether the graduates of this religious institution were discriminated or promoted based on their affiliation with a religious institution.

#### **1.5 Definition of Important Terms**

##### **1.5.1. Shi'a**

Refers to the followers of the Shi'a-Islamic faith who differ from the Sunni sect in their ideology and concept of Imamate. Cambridge dictionary defines the term 'Shia' as a follower of Islam's second-largest religious sect, that endorses Hazrat Ali (r.a), a family member and companion of Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h), and the teachers (Imams) who preceded him



were the true religious leaders (Cambridge Dictionary). This is a key term in this study because the study revolves around the Shi'a participants, and the perceived role and impact of their identity and belief system in their labor force participation.

### **1.5.2. Jamia (Djamia)**

According to the Islamic Encyclopaedia, the term 'jamia' is from Arabic, and means "gathering." It may also be used to describe a mosque or, more broadly, a university. In the latter sense, it applies to a modern university on the basis of Western model, as opposed to a medieval madrasa in official use (Brill, n.d.). This term plays a key role in the study as the study intends to explore the identity that a faith-based educational institution awards its students with, and the perceived impact of its affiliation on the future employment opportunities that come their way.

### **1.5.3. Madrassa (plural: madaris)**

The word 'madrassa' is originated from Arabic. The literal and common meaning of the term is "school;" however, it also refers to an educational institution that imparts Islamic teachings comprising of teachings of the Quran, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (hadith), Islamic law, and jurisprudence (fiqh) (Blanchard, 2008).

### **1.5.4. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation is the labor force distributed over the overall working age-population (i.e., 15-64 years) (OECD, 2021).

## **1.6 Units of Data Collection (UDC)**

Units of data collection refer to all the sources of information from which the data for the research is collected e.g., person, media, group, objects, books and other entities from which data can be drawn for the analysis by the researcher.

UDC 1: Graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar

Explanation: Graduates of the Shi'a-Islamic university "Jamia tu Al-Kauthar" were interviewed regarding their perceptions of their competencies for the labor market, specifically after completing their studies from Al-Kauthar University. Only those graduates were selected

for interviews who were or are participating in the labor force after graduating from the Jamia, regardless of their wages and job sector.

## **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis under study comprises of 8 chapters in total. Chapter 1 gives the background and an introduction to the topic of the study, followed by the Statement of the Problem, Research Problem, Research Questions, and Research Objectives. It also includes definitions of important terms and units of data collection. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the literature review on the topic, covering an introduction of religious educational institutions, educational system of Pakistan with specific focus on religious education, the link between educational quality and labor market outcomes, and finally the perceived religious discrimination in the workplaces. The chapter then discusses the significance as well as the limitations, and ends with the explanation of the Theoretical/Conceptual Framework of the study. Followed by Chapter 3, it discusses the literature related to the methodological applications of the study, and the methodological framework and strategies used to carry out the current research. Chapter 4 is an initiation of the overall findings of this study that summarizes the themes and sub-themes derived through the results. First, it explains the findings based on the first objective, i.e., exploring the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in labor force participation. Then it explains the theme based on the second objective, i.e., the perceived impact of religious identity on professional interaction. Chapter 5 gives the discussion on the relevance of the findings with the conceptual framework and other similar studies. Chapter 6 gives the conclusion of the whole study, and finally, Chapter 7 explains the relevance of the findings with the National Education Policy Framework 2018 and future recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the literature on the faith-based schools/religious educational institutions (REI). It further explains the scenario of the educational system in Pakistan with special focus on REIs. The link between educational quality and labor market outcomes is explained, while perceived religious discrimination in the workplaces is presented through the lens of previous studies. The significance and limitations of the study are explained. Finally, the conceptual framework applied to this study is presented at the end.

#### 2.2 Religious Educational Institutions / Faith-Based Schools

Madrassas were the epicenter of secular as well as religious education and knowledge in early Islam. To enrich their knowledge regarding Islamic/sharia principles and other such arenas of life, the Muslims belonging to diverse societal levels joined such institutions. The Madrassas were the first to introduce the notion of contemporary institutions like universities (Kausar & Sial, 2015). The distinction between secular education (need-based and market-oriented education) and Madrassa education (religious-based education) is rarely mentioned in Islamic history, but it has been a point of contention throughout the subcontinent's post-colonial history (Sawabi, 2012). In contrast to current madrassas, which are mainly focused on essentials like memorization of the Quran, Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, and Usul-ul-fiqh, the madrassa-based education system formerly concentrated on the process of credible and thorough academic study (Behuria, 2008).

Secular culture has become a prominent feature of the contemporary western arena. This culture has exempted contemplation and research on the religious aspects in academic and economic worlds. Faith-based educational institutions are often ignored by mainstream educational researchers while investigating any major issue. This has led to the marginalization of faith-based educational systems in globalized educational policy research. However, this is not just in the case of conventional educational stakeholders; the religious communities themselves do not pay the required attention to their capital. They do not prioritize to research the potential outcomes of religious educational institutions as research can produce both 'for and against' arguments and can be a controversial reality for the relevant religious

communities. Such REIs are present at a large-scale at the global level, but unfortunately the ratio of research-based evidence to REI proportion is very low. One of the major consequences of this misfortune is that a lot of public and political debates make robust arguments regarding the effect of faith-based educational institutions on the common betterment of the society (Grace, 2003, pp. 149-151).

According to Grace (2012), democratic nations should provide a diverse range of educational systems, including faith-based or religious educational institutions. Mostly, demolition of totalitarian regimes makes way for REIs to flourish and allows the citizens and parents to express their rights in education (Grace, 2012, p. 501).

Without a question, Madrassa played an important role in safeguarding Islam's essential values, but it also sought to modernize and resuscitate Muslim identity (Eddebo, 2014). According to the religious ranks connected with Madrassa, madrassas produce religious professionals (clerics) in the same way as other secular institutions produce professionals like physicians, engineers, and so on. They further claimed that a western-designed curriculum is being taught at secular educational institutions.

### **2.2.1 Catholic Educational Institutions**

All over the world, Catholic schools are another form of religious educational institutions. Studies have shown that students who attended Catholic schooling have prominent effects on educational, behavioral, as well as labor market outcomes. Previous studies, such as by Tyler (1994) and Neal (1997), concluded that Catholic schooling resulted in better labor market performance in the early years of graduate's careers. However, Kim (2011) suggests that Catholic school's quality plays a vital role in its graduate's successful labor market performance in the longer run. They were reported to have performed better 17 and 35 years after graduation in the economic front, as compared to the graduates of public schools. The main points of difference in the quality of Catholic and public schools were the number of math courses taken and the education level of the teachers. With an increase in the number of math courses, the results showed 4 per cent increase in the wages after 17 years of graduation and 6 per cent increase after 36 years of graduation. Similar effects were recorded for the teacher's education. Overall, Catholic schooling had prominent effects on the student's wages in the longer run as compared to the graduates of public schools (Kim, 2011; Tyler, 1994; Neal, 1997).

## **2.3 Educational System of Pakistan**

According to the World Education Services, Pakistan's education system has significantly evolved due to the Islamic and British influence in its history. On one hand, it follows modern teaching mechanisms available for the elite and middle-class citizens who can afford them. On the other, with a majority of Muslim population, Islamic values and teachings are incorporated in the education system as well. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT) is the main body that sets education policies and quality standards; however, each province sets its own curricula. The federal government looks over both the higher education as well as the technical and vocational education (TVET), but the Higher Education Commission (HEC) looks over the regulation and funding of the higher education in Pakistan. Parallel to this, the federal government established Pakistan Madrassah Education Board in 2001, to establish model Islamic seminaries and compete with the private boards. However, such plans have now been renewed to maintain the religious educational institutions funded by both Saudi Arabia and Iran for Sunni and Shi'a institutions, respectively. Today, religious educational institutions have grown to several over 30,000, with an estimated 1.8 million to 3.5 million enrolled students. Many of these are unregistered under any of the national educational board systems. However, some have formally registered themselves with the madrassa boards, and teach their students the necessary subjects according to the national school curriculum. Moreover, the post-secondary Madrassa qualifications are also recognized by the HEC as equivalent to Bachelor's and Master's qualifications in Arabic and Islamic Studies. Recently, the MFEP has made it compulsory for the Madrassa students to clear the federal board examinations and bring the overall education system of Pakistan on one page (Hunter, 2020).

### **2.3.1 Madrassas of Pakistan**

The government of Pakistan formed the Auqaf department within the ministry of religious affairs shortly after independence to involve the clergy in policymaking and incorporate them with other elements of society (Kausar & Sial, 2015, p.127). Religious scholars (clergy) generally concentrated on sectarian biases instead of the role of current mainstream politics and policymaking. As a result, societal intolerance and religious rigidity has greatly increased sect-specific education and Fatwas on every public topic (Assyaukanie, 2009). Religious authorities from various sects understood in the late 1950s that Madrassa activities across the country should be standardized and coordinated under one school of thought (Klasra, 2002). As a result, they formed five divisions to represent significant religious schools of thought,

similar to the secular education system. These boards' principal goals were to provide a consistent religious-based curriculum, organize yearly Madrassa examinations, register Madrassas, and give degree certificates of Islamic competence. The Ulema (religious scholars) of each religious sect willingly enrolled their Madrassas under these boards; Governments quickly recognized these bodies when they were established (Behuria, 2008, pp. 58-59). These boards are in charge of registering and supervising madrassas belonging to their distinct schools of thought. It's important to keep in mind that not all Madrassas are affiliated with their school of thought. Because registration is optional, these bodies do not have the right to compel Madrassas to register (Sawabi, 2012, p. 37).

The Madrassa system of Pakistan is a gateway for the poor society to access education and increase their chances of getting employed. Such educational institutions also help to reduce crime rates and involvement of children in illegal activities significantly. However, through research it has been found that most graduates of Madrassas work mostly as teachers, religious preachers, or speakers in mosques and some or other *madaris*. According to Evans (2008), there is a whole new market for madrassa graduates, i.e. teachers or preachers. Students who graduate from Islamic educational institutes secure less chances of getting jobs like those of a pilot, doctor, or an engineer. However, madrassa graduates are mostly found employed in their own domain. Moreover, who pursue madrassa studies till a higher level are able to get higher jobs in Islamic Banks. Religiously inspired businesses then also make space for these graduates in the form of legal advisors. Some also work to resolve domestic cases (marriage/divorce-related cases), and hence share the burden of the formal court system of the country. If seen from the perspective of the Madrassa graduates and administrators, they are contributing massively to the social and moral prosperity of Pakistan. However, this perspective changes when taken from an outsider, especially regarding the participation of such graduates in the labor market. In this regard, researchers have proposed new topics to be explored, such as the influence of religious educational institutions on the level of employability of their graduates, and more primary data needs to be acquired from religious institutions run by all schools of thought in Pakistan (Evans, 2008; Javaid, 2012).

### **2.3.2 Madrassa Reforms in Pakistan**

Reforming madrassas is urgently needed to dispel the myth that madrassa education produces radicals and terrorists. As a result, madrassa reforms create a different narrative and include religious communities in policymaking (Delamontagne, 2010). Governments achieve this by

persuading certain major Ulemas (clerics), even though some leading Ulemas have severe objections about Madrassa reforms. There is a lack of confidence between the government and the religious community, indicating that certain senior Ulemas and religious political parties are unhappy with the madrassa reforms. Madrassa management is usually encouraged to register voluntarily by the government. As a result, Madrassas are neither officially governed nor formally registered with the Pakistani government. Those who have sought formal affiliation with one of the five boards of their school of thought hold the status of registered Madrassa. Only a small percentage of Madrassas are registered with their different bodies, according to estimates (Tanoli, 2018). The majority of Madrassas are unregistered and operate independently. As a result, determining the true number of registered and unregistered Madrassas in the country is challenging.

Previously, the government made minimal attempts to modernize Madrassa education by raising the issue to par with official education. As a response, these changes primarily aimed to bring Madrassa education up to par with formal education, such as equivalency. Governments and other players have been unable to construct a narrative around Madrassa reforms. As a result, no major efforts were made in the country to reform the structure and method of Madrassa education. The APS tragedy (December 2014 attack on Army public school in Peshawar) highlights the need for Madrassa reforms as well as a new narrative in Pakistan. The government, in collaboration with all political parties, has developed a national action plan to combat terrorism and extremism in the country. As a result, madrassa reform is one of the National Action Plan's 20 points. The Pakistani government has launched an endeavor to reform Madrassas in terms of structure, registration, rules and regulations, and curriculum changes.

#### **2.4 Educational Quality and Labor Market Outcomes**

Education is among the key concerns that need attention for the social and economic development of a country. Different countries invest in their education sectors to boost their economic growth through various factors, such as labor force participation. However, quality of education is found to positively affect the economic and income growth of a country. Distribution of human capital or adequate skills is another determinant of economic growth (Boccanfuso, Larouche, & Trandafir, 2015). Most developing countries focus on stretching and expanding the educational quantity through establishing more educational institutes and deploying more teachers in the existing ones. Such initiatives are usually taken to obtain higher

payoffs in the form of increased labor force participation. However, it has been proved through research that more important area of investment than the quantity of educational institutes is the quality of education deliverance. The annual earnings growth is seen to have increased if the quality of education is enhanced rather than the quantity (Akbari, Muhammed, & Mahmood, 2001).

Similarly, the case of Senegal illustrates low employment rates for educated individuals. In an attempt to test the effectiveness of better educational quality in enhancing employment levels, short-term educational reforms were made. To track the difference created by the reform on the employment rates, the study took samples of pre-reform and post-reform respondents for comparison. One of the two objectives of the reform included improvement in educational quality. Several quality indicators were also defined to further narrow down the performance of the reforms. The findings suggested that short-term reforms strongly enhanced the rate of employment of the graduates in Senegal. Higher education benefitted the most from these reforms than primary and secondary education. This sub-Saharan African country became an example for how improvement in quality education can boost the employment rate of fresh graduates and increase their participation in the labor force (Boccanfuso, Larouche, & Trandafir, 2015).

Another way to boost labor force participation is to capacitate the educational institutions themselves to provide the desired training and skillset. A solution to this—according to Robson (2013) – is that the educational institutions impart ‘experiential learning’ to the students, i.e., expose the students to work environment through work placement (these educational programs are also known as ‘co-operative education’). A Canadian-led organization leads such ‘co-operative education’ program, which exchanges some academic periods with practical work environment exposure. Such initiatives resulted in the students having relevant occupational skills that were useful to them in their professional careers (Robson, 2013b).

## **2.5 Religion and Perceived Discrimination in the Workplace**

If we talk about the population of the United States, religious and cultural diversity is seen as the most prominent feature. However, with this diversity come side-effects on the employment sector as well. Many employers/employees like to bring up religion in workplaces, which leads to a perceived discrimination among other employees. A study, conducted by Scheitle and Ecklund (2016) through a national survey in the U.S., concluded that the more religion is



reported to become a topic in the workplace, the more likely they are to perceive discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs and affiliation. Religious discrimination is least felt or perceived where religion never becomes the topic of discussion or expression in the workplaces. The modes of expression of their religious affiliations include asking for a holiday for a religious event, having a sacred text in one's hand case, or wearing religiously representative dress or ornaments. Moreover, where Catholic and Protestant groups are the main receptors of religious discrimination (if religion comes up at the workplace), Jews, Hindus, and Muslims are reported to perceive religious discrimination even if religion never comes up in their professional environment(s). Possible reasons noted for this were that Muslims and Jews were the minority religious communities in the U.S., where the majority practice Christian religious tradition; hence, they are comparatively more visible than other religious groups and perceive discrimination even when religion does not become the topic of discussion in their workplace(s) (Scheitle & Ecklund, 2017).

In the same lines, personal information displayed on the social networking sites is also a strong determinant of a job candidate receiving an interview call by an employer. Candidates are likely to be discriminated based on the personal information they have posted online (even though concealed in their resumes or curriculum vitae). Acquisti and Fong (2014) conducted a randomized field experiment to see whether the employers search online for the candidate's personal affiliations before giving them an interview call. According to the results, the hiring behaviors in the United States are highly influenced by the information disclosed on social media and other professional networks such as LinkedIn. One of the two personal traits that were focused by the researchers was being a Muslim and/or a Christian. Hence, religious identity disclosed by job candidates over online platforms contributed to the Muslim applicants being discriminated (with 13% lower interview call rate) as compared to their Christian counterparts (majority religious community in the U.S.) (Acquisti & Fong, 2015).

Such perceived discriminatory behaviors at the workplace can significantly diminish work performance of the employees. Messarra (2014) concludes in her study (surveying 548 employees in the post-9/11 United States) that employee's work-related behaviors—commitment and engagement—are severely affected as a result of their perceived religious discrimination. Hence, it is necessary for the employers to maintain an environment where religiously diverse and religious minorities can work diligently without perceiving discrimination on the basis of their religious affiliations (Messarra, 2014).

## **2.6 Significance of Research**

In Pakistan, data on the perceived discrimination and/or empowerment of workers based on their affiliation with a minority religious sect in Pakistan is not widely available. This data may enable the policymakers to improve Pakistan's labor force participation with the help of minority-sensitive policies. Research in Senegal also highlights that reforms in higher education led to increased labor force participation (Boccanfuso, Larouche, & Trandafir, 2015). This study specifically focuses on the enablers and constraints for graduates of Shi'a-led institute (Jamia tu Al-Kauthar) in their participation in the labor force.

Moreover, this research can also recommend areas to cover in the future to the researchers, such as perceptions of employers regarding the skillsets of graduates of faith-based educational institute and those of a regular educational institute. Another application of this study can be for Jamia tu Al-Kauthar itself, such as to improve methods of imparting practical skillsets to its students and maintaining those that are already under process.

## **2.7 Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited by the following constraints:

- The study employs data from all male participants as the target institute provided educational services to male students only. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be used to identify the comparative impact of gender on religious and professional identities.
- The data and results of this study are indicative as it does not represent the entire Madrassa sector of Pakistan. Hence, this study informs future researchers and scholars to conduct a representative study on the issue with a greater sample size.

It must be kept in mind that the graduates of the institute and the respondents of this study were solely employed in the teaching profession (mostly basic subjects and religious subjects). Hence, the impact of their affiliation with the institute on their professional identities cannot be generalized to other professions than teaching.

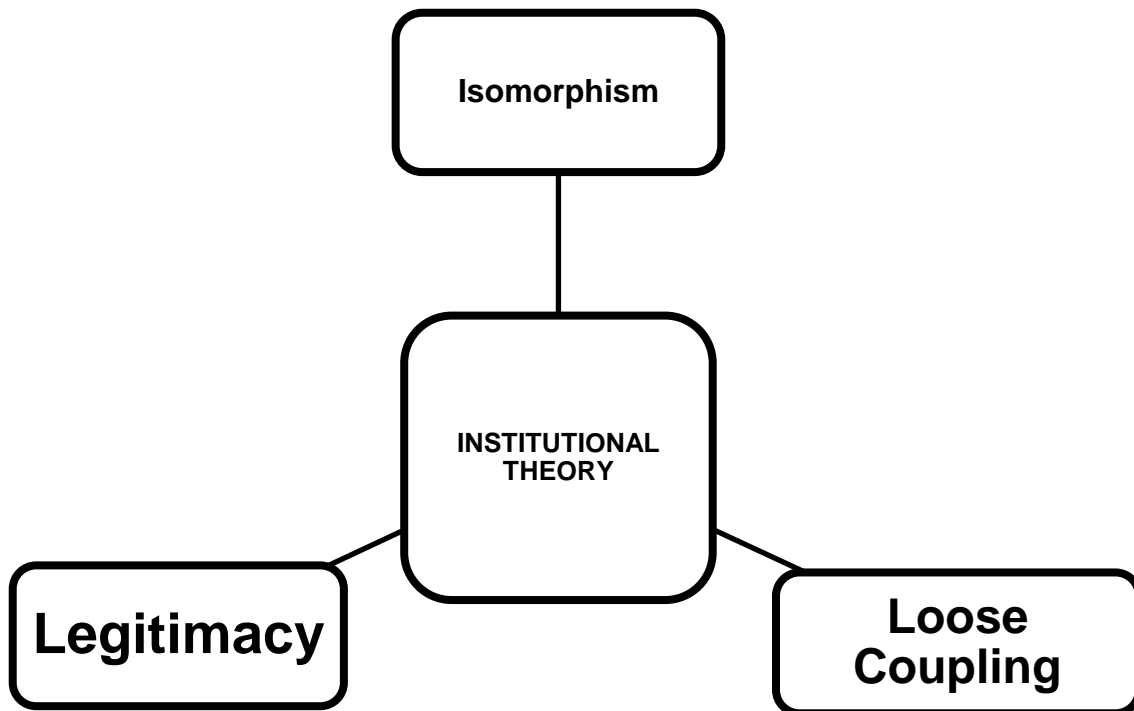
## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Institutional theory, developed in the early 1970s by John Meyer and Brian Rowan, contends that the expansion of educational institutions is notable worldwide; nevertheless, they do not focus on meeting the demands put forth by the labor market. This theory uses the terms of *'legitimate'* and *'ceremonial rituals'* to describe the approach of institutions to survive in the institutional environment. He notes that the institutions have not expanded as a result of the requirements of the workforce, rather to maintain their legitimacy in their environment. To describe this process, he uses the term *'isomorphism'*– institutions take up the selective qualities to align with their peers with the same conditions and make themselves legitimate (Robson, 2013a). Isomorphism, hence, is the institutional conformity to the norms, values, and technical standards that are standardized by the institutional actors. Institutional theory, therefore, sees such educational institutions as “captive” systems–not abiding by the demands of labor market– and conformed to achieving standards not required to develop technical efficiency, but only to gain institutional acceptability (Meyer & Rowan, 2006).

Meyer further talks about *'loose coupling'*, whereby the educational institutions are less mobilized by their need for technical efficiency and demand of attaining skills, but more by the need of meeting the popular belief of educational expansion and legitimacy. Many organisations adopt institutionalised products, services, procedures, policies, and programmes, ceremoniously; however, compliance to institutionalised rules frequently clashes with efficiency standards/criteria. Organizations that reflect institutional rules tend to loosely couple their formal structures from the uncertainties of technical activities in order to maintain ceremonial conformance, creating gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities. Hence, educational institutions are driven more by the institutional actors rather than the labor market demands (Meyer & Rowan, 2006).

Many researchers have applied this theory in the fields of economic change and development, political science, sociological study of organizations, and educational studies (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, p. 1). This theory is applied in the context of religious educational institutions and labor force participation to the first objective of this research, i.e., the perceived role of the knowledge provided by the educational institution that was helpful in labor market competence. As the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in the labor force participation of its graduates was analyzed, my discussion was built based on the institutional theory in the sense that whether this religious educational institution proved to be an *isomorphic* institution that

expands to seek legitimacy, or is it developing itself to fulfil the demands of the market and achieve technical efficiency.



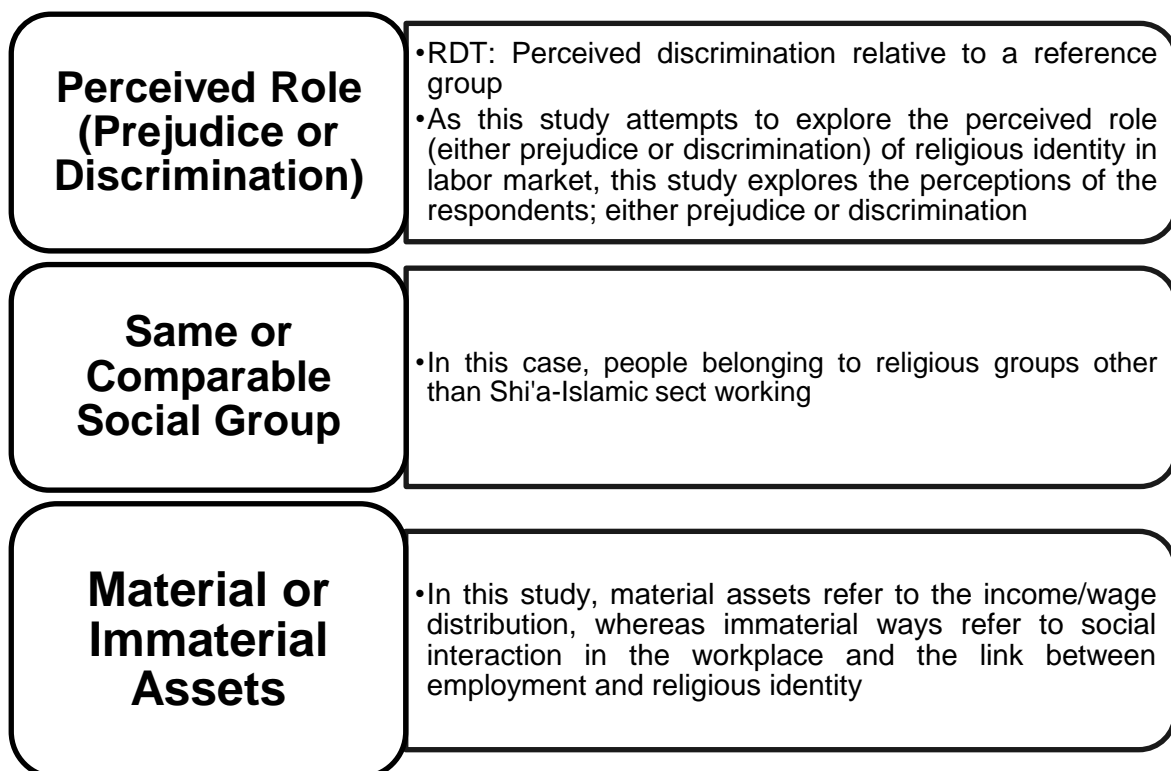
*Figure 2.1* Institutional Theory

Secondly, Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) was applied to the objective regarding perceived role (prejudice or discrimination) of the religious identity of the graduates in their labor force participation. Relative Deprivation Theory is widely utilized to see the perceived discrimination of one individual/group relative to a reference individual/group in terms of material and immaterial assets. This theory emerged from “An American Soldier” by Stouffer (1949). Robert K. Merton (1950) also dealt with the same theory. To identify the reference groups for comparison, Merton selected three categories one of which includes “people with same or comparable social status”; in this case, people belonging to religious groups other than Shi’a-Islamic sect will become the reference group (Schulze & Krätschmer-Hahn, 2014). There are four preconditions that need to be fulfilled in order to tell if someone is relatively deprived, according to Walter Garry Runciman. These are:

- An individual does not have object X
- An individual knows other people who have object X

- An individual would like to own object X
- An individual believes it is probable to own object X (Janse, 2020).

Walter Runciman also gave the distinctions between fraternal and egoistic deprivation. Fraternal relative deprivation is more connected in the form of group social movements, whereas egoistic relative deprivation is an individual perception of relative discrimination in a group (Longley, 2021). In this study, we are more concerned with egoistic relative deprivation.



*Figure 2.2* Relative Deprivation Theory

## 2.9 Summary

This chapter encapsulates various studies on the introduction of religious educational institutions, educational system of Pakistan with specific focus on religious education, the link between educational quality and labor market outcomes, and finally the perceived religious discrimination in the workplaces. It then explains the significance as well as the limitations of the current study. Finally, the chapter sheds light on literature related to the Theoretical/Conceptual Framework. This study has selected the Institutional Theory for the first objective of the research, and Relative Deprivation Theory for the second objective.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter moves on to literature related to the methodological applications of the study. It aims to elaborate the methods that were applied to this study, supported with previously available literature.

#### **3.2 Methodology**

A research methodology is a technique for conducting research in a systematic manner. The methodology of study refers to the processes and methods that a researcher uses as a work plan for forecasting, identifying, and explaining a phenomenon. It typically involves concepts such as theoretical model, stages, paradigm, and quantitative or qualitative techniques. The methodology of a research comprises research strategy, research design, methods of data collection, data analysis, and sampling techniques. The methodology of this study has been elaborated below:

##### **3.2.1 Research Strategy**

There are different kinds of research strategies that are either separately used to conduct a research or mix them to analyze the results; qualitative and quantitative methods are two main types of such strategies. According to Snape and Spencer (2003, p. 3), qualitative research involves interpretative analyses of the meanings of social phenomena that people have attached in their personal contexts. Qualitative research is generally understood as the approach that uses in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, observations, and narratives to learn more about the social contexts of the research participants through documenting their experiences and perspectives (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

The current research follows a qualitative strategy as it tends to explore a sensitive topic. The researcher grasps an interpretive understanding of the perceptions of the study participants, regarding the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in imparting knowledge helpful for labor force participation as well as the impact of their religious identity on their employment.

### **3.2.2 Research Design**

Stebbins (2001, pp. 2-17) describes exploratory research in social sciences as a purposive and broad-ranging activity that is carried out to understand the target area of social life. The understandings include folk concepts, cultural heritage, social experiences and phenomena, societal structures, and/or belief systems of the groups. This methodology of research is widely used in qualitative research approach; however, it is also used in quantitative studies in some cases. According to Stebbins (2001), this methodology is adopted when the researcher has no or limited scientific knowledge regarding a specific group, process, or activity, yet believes that there is more scientific knowledge worth studying (Stebbins, 2001).

The current research employs an exploratory approach. Due to the unavailability of sufficient literature with respect to the subject, this study explores the perceptions of graduates from a Shi'a-led educational institute regarding the knowledge imparted to make them competent enough for the labor force, and also the consequences (discrimination and/or empowerment) of being affiliated with an educational institute led by minority sect in Pakistan's religious fabric.

### **3.2.3 Methods of Data Collection**

Interviews were used as method of this study, and semi-structured interviews were selected as data collection tools. Open-ended interview guides were designed as instruments to conduct the required interviews with the respondents. Interview guide is attached as Appendix A. The interviews were collected after acquiring consents from the participants through consent forms. The consent forms are attached as Appendix B. The participants are mentioned with pseudonyms throughout the research.

#### **3.2.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews**

The graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar were interviewed through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were recorded through audio-recorder after acquiring consent (subject to confidentiality and solely to keep a track of all responses). The interviews were accompanied by a consent form signed by the respondents. Before conducting and recording the interview(s), permission was sought. Data was collected from a total of 20 respondents, after which the data content was saturated. Data saturation is usually used to identify when a study's data is sufficient enough to produce a valid knowledge of the topic

under study. It is applied to purposive (nonprobability) samples often used in qualitative research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2019).

### **3.2.3.2 Data Analysis**

Face-to-face interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed through thematic analysis, while the documented responses were cleaned and organized into themes and sub-themes. The method of thematic analysis comprises of six phases: familiarization, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing, defining and naming themes, and finally the write-up. Firstly, the researcher makes herself familiar with the transcribed data. This step is followed by generating codes for data that are relevant to the research questions. Followed by this, the codes are examined to identify major themes, which are then reviewed and checked again for their relevance to the research objectives. Then these themes are named to make a story-like description. Finally, these themes are written in the form of narratives and linked with previous literature (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These themes are the identified categories by the analyst presented in the findings. Usually, these themes are linked to the research questions and help to establish a theoretical interpretation of the results, which may contribute to a theoretical contribution to the literature in the research field (Bryman & Bell, 2016).

### **3.2.4 Sampling**

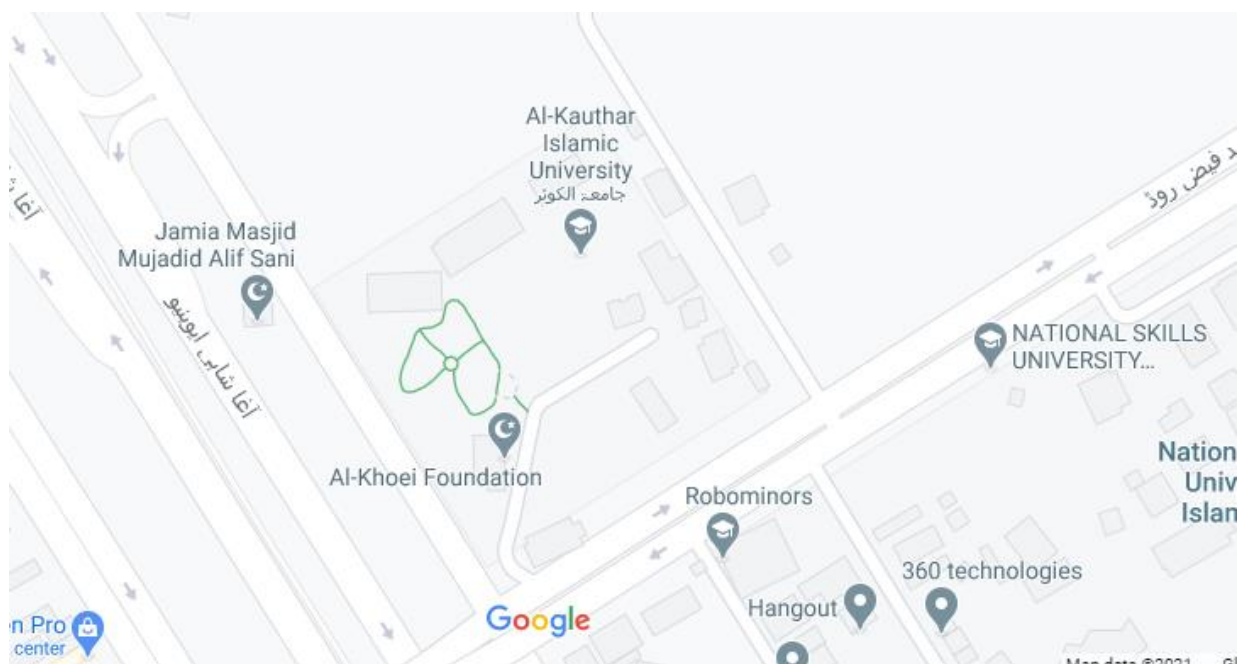
The sampling method for this research is non-probabilistic in nature. According to Anol Bhattacharjee, in non-probabilistic sampling technique, some units of the population do not get a chance to be selected, and there is not an accurate determination of the probability of selection (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Furthermore, the sampling technique is purposive, which comprises of the intentional selection of the participants for the study (Robinson, 2014) so as to select the respondents according to the research objectives.

The inclusion criteria of this sample were that the respondents must be graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar and having any or some source of income, i.e., employed. The exclusion criteria were based on graduates of the Jamia but not yet employed.

### **3.2.5 Locale**



The study was carried out at the Shia-Islamic University in Islamabad, Jamia tu Al-Kauthar. The institute was founded in 1992 by Al-Khoei Foundation but started its academic activities in 2002. The aim of this Shi'a-led university is to aware its graduates as scholars, preachers, teachers, and researchers in the modern world, keeping them aligned with the religious education system. Along with the faculties of Quran and Hadith, Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, and Preachers, this institute also maintains Department of English (About Jamia Al-Kauthar, 2021). The institute/Madrassa is regulated under the Wafaq ul Madaris Shi'a, Pakistan, which is controlled and authorized by the Government. The same Board accredits and awards degrees to the graduates of these institutes, and graduates from the recognized institutes/Madrassas are awarded equivalence from the Ministry of Education only (Rabbi & Habib, 2019).



*Figure 3.1* Geographical location of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar (Google, 2021)

### 3.3 Summary

The current research employs a qualitative research strategy with exploratory approach. The research methods are Interview and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools. Interview guides were used as the instruments to collect data. Sample size was determined through non-probabilistic, purposive sampling. The data was analyzed through

thematic analysis process. Finally, Jamia tu Al Kauthar institute in Islamabad was selected as the research locale.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section comprises of the findings and results that have been collected during the research process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from 20 male respondents. Table 4.1 shows the characteristics/socio-demographics of the respondents of this study. Table 4.2 gives a summary of the themes and sub-themes generated from the data.

From the obtained data, themes have been extracted to further organize and compose the raw material, which will lead to the deduction of the desired outcomes. The respondents have been mentioned with pseudonyms to conceal their identities as promised. The data, collected through semi-structured interviews, has been transcribed while the relevant quotes (verbatim in Urdu) of the respondents have been penned under each theme to clarify and justify the presence of the theme along with their English translations.

The interviews were transcribed and translated to carry out thematic analysis. After coding and extraction of themes, following overarching themes were extracted from the responses:

- Jamia tu Al-Kauthar and Labor Force Participation
  - Market-oriented Skills
  - Role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in Provision of Market-oriented Skills
    - Strengths of the Institute
    - Perceived Limitations
  - Degree Awarded by Wafaq ul Madaris and Job-seeking
- Impact of Religious Identity on Professional Interaction

All of these themes, along with their sub-themes, addressed the research objectives selected in the beginning of the research.

- To explore the *perceived* role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in participation of Jamia graduates in the labor force market
- To explore the *perceived* role of the religious identity of Al-Kauthar graduates in their employment (i.e., labor force participation)

**Table 4.1** Socio-demographics of the Participants

N=20		
Age		
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	29 ± 4
	<i>Range</i>	22-35
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Gender (Male)		
<i>Male</i>	20	100
Religious Qualification *		
<i>Darse Kharij</i>	5	25
<i>Kifayatain</i>	5	25
<i>M.A. Arabic</i>	7	35
<i>Rasail Doum</i>	1	5
<i>Rasail Shashtam</i>	1	5
<i>Rasail Soem</i>	1	5
Contemporary Qualification		
<i>B.A.</i>	4	20
<i>F.A.</i>	6	30
<i>M.A.</i>	1	5
<i>M.A. Education</i>	2	10
<i>M.A. Islamiat</i>	3	15
<i>M.A. Islamic Studies</i>	1	5
<i>MPhil. Education</i>	1	5
<i>MPhil International Relations</i>	2	10
Graduating Year		
<i>Range</i>	2015-2021	
Profession		
<i>Online Teaching</i>	10	50
<i>University Teaching</i>	3	15
<i>Religious Teaching in Madrassas</i>	7	35

Table 4.1 shows that 50% of the respondents were employed as online teachers in religious educational settings. These respondents taught religious subjects to students of the Jamia across

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\* Darse Kharij (after completion of 14 years of education)  
 Kifayatain (13-14 years of education)  
 Rasail Doum (10-12 years of education)  
 Rasail Shashtam (10-12 years of education)  
 Rasail Soum (10-12 years of education)

and outside Pakistan through online platforms. 15% respondents were employed in regular, conventional universities, whereas 35% respondents were engaged in religious teaching in the Jamia as well as other similar Madrassas.

The following sections are based on the elaborations on the data received regarding both of the objectives of this study.

## **4.2 Jamia tu Al-Kauthar and Labor Force Participation**

This section thoroughly explains the themes that were derived from the data through thematic analysis. Each theme is supported by verbatim and their translations, and the respondents are mentioned with pseudonyms against each narrative. The main theme under discussion is the perceived link of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar with labor force participation.

The respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding the contribution and the role of their institute in developing the market-specific skills and meeting the contemporary requirements of the labor market. The themes derived from their responses are as follows:

### **4.2.1 Market-oriented Skills**

The first sub-theme elaborates the respondents' opinions about the most required skills in the contemporary job market. In their views, knowledge is undeniably among the most needed factors to excel in career and compete in the contemporary market. However, practical skills such as computer-operations, online technology, digital skills, and Spoken-English skills are imperative to succeed in the contemporary era.

In this respect, a respondent expressed his opinion regarding the importance of knowledge in labor force participation.

*Daur e hazir mein rozgar ke liye wo ilm zyada darkar hai jo asr e hazir ke taqazon se ham ahang ho.*

Translation:

To have a respectable livelihood, knowledge that is consistent and resonates with the aspects of the contemporary era is more needed – *Hafiz (religious teaching)*

Similarly, another respondent who was an online teacher opined the need of online technological skills among the contemporary market participants.

*Aj ka daur online daur hai. Koi bhi field ho usko sirf offline hadd tak mehdood na rakhen balke online platform pe bhi isko le jayen jisse rozgar me kamyabi zaroor milegi. Lehaza English zuban seekhne ke sath internet ki technology ko samajhna bhi zaroori hai*

Translation:

The contemporary era is an online one. No field should be limited to offline platforms, rather success in livelihood will be guaranteed if we take it up to the online market. Hence, along with spoken English skills, it is very important to understand the internet technology as well - *Ali (online teaching)*

A respondent, who was apparently fluent in English and was engaged as an online teacher, regarded Spoken English skills as a necessary skill to successfully survive in the contemporary market.

*Kuch aloom aj ke daur mein buhat barri zaroorat ban chukay hain jesa ke English se shanasai*

Translation:

Some knowledge has become an immense need of the current times such as familiarity with the English language - *Muhammad (online teaching)*

*Kisi bhi fun mein top ki qabliat kana aur modern languages par kaam karna rozgar mein madad desakta hai*

Translation:

Specialization in any kind of “Art” and working on modern languages can help in earning livelihood - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

Apart from the Spoken-English skills, “convincing skills/power” is another important aspect to succeed today along with learning different languages.

*Aj ke daur mein digital skills seekhne ki zarurat hai. Mukhtalif languages seekhne ke sath logon ko qail karne ki silahiyat ka hamil hona bhi aj ki zaroorat hai*

Translation:

It is necessary to learn digital skills in the contemporary times. Along with learning different languages, convincing power is also the need of today -

*Haseeb (online teaching)*

Modern “scientific knowledge” and “technological skills” were also reported to be among the necessary requirements to compete in the labor market operating in the contemporary era, including the computer literacy and engineering skills.

*Aj ke daur mein aik aisa ilm seekhne ki zarurat hai jiski zarurat muashre ko ho aur apki zindagi ko bhi hunar qarar de sake. Wo ilm hai jadeed science aur jadeed technology*

Translation:

In today’s era, it is important to learn knowledge that benefits both our society as well as our personal lives. Such knowledge is of Modern Science and

Modern Technology - *Haseeb (online teaching)*

*Pakistan ke aksar mehekmo mein electronic se mutalliq ilm ko zada tarjeeh di jati hai. Isliye aksar taalib e ilm ko rozgar ke liye computer aur engineering se mutalliq courses karwana zaroori hai*

Translation:

Most institutes of Pakistan prefer Computer literacy skills and Engineering skills. Hence, it is important to arrange Computers and Engineering related courses for the students - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

Without specifying the niche of the skills, simply “practical skills” were considered to be sufficient and necessary to earn respectable livelihood in the current job market. Preparing oneself in the practice of the chosen field yields success and guarantees the longevity of the career pathway.

*Mere khayal mein aj ke daur mein rozgar mein kamyabi ke liye har wo ilm aur amlī maharat ehm kirdar ada karti hai jis mein faqat ap kitabon ki istalahat tak mehdood na rahen balke is se aglay marhalay yaani is field ko mad e nazar rakh kar apne apko tayyar karein*

Translation:

In my opinion, every kind of knowledge and practical skill that transcends mere bookish terms towards the practicality within the specified field, plays an important role in enabling one to earn respectable livelihood - *Bilal* (regular teaching)

On the other hand, some respondents were of the view that knowledge and market compatibility have no direct relation. A “degree” in that field and specialization in various kinds of “Art” would be helpful to compete in the job market.

*Bunyadi tor pe hasool e ilm aik alag cheez hai aur rozgar ka hasool ilm se koi taaluq nhi hai. Lekin agar insan chahta hai ilm bhi hasil kare sath koi rozgar bhi mil jaye maslan koi job waghera tou uske liye zaroori hai ke insan degree bhi hasil kare aur sath apne apko mukhtalif funoon se bhi arasta kare*

Translation:

Basically, the attainment of knowledge is a different thing and it has no link with earning livelihood. However, if a person wants to attain knowledge and have a job as well, it is necessary to get a degree and specialize in different kinds of Arts - *Ameer* (regular teaching)

*Mere khyal mein zamana badal chukka hai aur aj dunya aik Global Village ban chuki hai. Aj ke zamanay ke sath sath chalne ke liye na sirf junoon pe zor diya jaye balke zyada se zyada funoon pe kaam kiya jaye take taalib e ilm junoon pe maharat rakhne ke sath sath funoon par bhi maharat rakhta ho aur wo zamanay ke sath chal sakay aur rozgar ke munasib mawaqae hasil karsake*

Translation:



In my view, the current times have changed and the world has turned into a Global Village. To walk with the contemporary era, we should not only focus on passion but also Arts, so that the students specialize both in passion as well as different kinds of Art, and they may walk with the World and find appropriate means of livelihood - *Bilal (regular teaching)*

Having the skills to manage and administer your own “Business” was another opinion raised by the respondents amongst the array of market-oriented skills.

*Mere khayal mein job hi ilm ho farq nhi rakhta lekin karobari peshwa ke baaray mein kuch na kuch maharat rakhna chahiye aur mere liye rozgar ka behtareen sabab karobar hai*

Translation:

In my opinion, the kind of knowledge does not matter; however, having some kind of skills in Business Administration does help and for me, the best way to earn through is Business - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

*Agar aj ke halaat dekhien jaen tou nokri wala kaam tou mushkil hi hai, lehaza sab se mufeed aik hi soorat bachti hai aur wo apna karobar hai. Agar halaat ache hain aur karobar shuru kiya jaskta hai tou ye sabse behtareen option hai*

Translation:

Keeping in view the prevailing situation of the job market, having a job is a difficult task. Hence, the most beneficial option is to have your own business. If your circumstances allow you, Business is the best option - *Rehman (online teaching)*

A minority of the respondents opined that the courses offered in Madrassas are better in terms of having a livelihood later. In this regard, a respondent expressed that only the subjects being taught at the Madrassas in general are enough to survive in the contemporary job market.

*Mere khyal mein rozgar ke lie ye Madaris walay courses filhal behtar hai. Is mein kuch behtareen kutab ko add kiya hai Quran ki tajweed waghera aur Tafseer e Quran. In se taleem ka mayyar behtar hua hai*

Translation:

In my opinion, the courses offered by Madrassas are better for now to earn livelihood. Some of the best books have been added recently, like Tajweed e Quran and Tafseer e Quran. They have improved the standard of learning -  
*Jawad (religious teaching)*

#### **4.2.2 Role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in Provision of Market-oriented Skills**

The respondents shared their experiences and perceptions whether their institute had provided them with the market-oriented skills that they think were important to compete in the job market today.

##### **4.2.2.1 Strengths of the Institute**

###### **Provision of Knowledge:**

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that the institute had instilled the knowledge in them that they think are necessary to compete in the labor market in the current times. A respondent explained that the Jamia provided real education and knowledge to its graduates and enhanced them in terms of their personalities.

*Yaqeenan agar daur e jaded ke taqazon ko mad e nazar rakha jaye tou jahan Taleem aur ilm dia jata hai tou wo Jamia tu Al-Kauthar hai. Deeni talibe ilm ki is nehaj tak tarbiyat karne mein Jamia sabse agay hai balke Jamia is hawalay se riwayat shikan hai aur isne jadeed zarurato ke mutabiq taleemmi nizam ke zariye talib e ilm ki tarbiyat karke dunya ki nigahen badli aur Talib e ilm ko mustakil shakhsiyat ka hamil banaya*

Translation:

Indeed, if we take into account the needs of the contemporary era, Jamia tu Al-Kauthar is the place where education and knowledge is provided. The Jamia leads the race when we talk about the training of religious students; it

breaks the traditions and trains the students according to the needs of the contemporary times. It makes the personality of its students consistent - *Hafiz (religious teaching)*

Another respondent explained that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar excelled in terms of provision of knowledge, specifically in the fields of Tafseer, Uloom e Qur'ani, Ilm e Kalam, Ilm e Hadith, Ilm e Fiqh, and Ilm e Rijaal.

*Doosre madaris ke muqabail behtreen paya kyunke yahan deegar kutab ke sath Tafseer, Uloom e Qurani kisi had tak behtareen sabit hua hai*

Translation:

I found Jamia tu Al-Kauthar better as compared to other Madrassas because they taught us Tafseer and Uloom e Qurani along with other books - *Irfan (religious teaching)*

*Ilm e Usool, Ilm e Mantaq, Ilm e Kalam, Ilm e Hadith, Ilm e Fiqh, Ilm e Tafseer, Ilm e Rijaal waghera ka dar asal ilm hasil kiya. Aj jo kuch bhi hun wo Jamia ki waja se hun*

Translation:

I received education in Ilm e Usool, Ilm e Mantaq, Ilm e Kalam, Ilm e Hadith, Ilm e Fiqh, Ilm e Tafseer, and Ilm e Rijaal. Whatever I am today, it is due to the Jamia - *Haider (online teaching)*

### **Practical Skills:**

Many respondents shared how the knowledge and practical skills that they gained from the institute has played an important role in their practical lives.

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar se sirf ilm hi nhi balke buhat si aqli maharat bhi seekhne ko mili hain jo aj practical zindagi mein kaam aarahi hain, jesa ke parhanay ka andaaz*

Translation:

I have not only gained knowledge from Jamia tu Al-Kauthar, but also the practical skills that are now helpful for me in the practical life, such as teaching skills - *Azeem (online teaching)*

Some respondents shared the wide array of opportunities that they availed during their academic tenure at the institute. Those opportunities opened new doors towards learning research as a practical skill.

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar ne hamein buhat saray mauqay faraham kiye hain aur yahan sab sahuliyat maujood hain ke jin ke zariye se ham buhat agay jasaktay hain kyunke is mein university mein bhejne ki sahulat aur taleemi tehqeeq waghera karne ki sahuliyat maujood hain*

Translation:

Jamia tu Al-Kauthar has provided us with many chances and all kinds of facilities through which we can succeed in our lives. It gives us the chance to go to universities and perform research in academics - *Babar (online teaching)*

Respondents shared the importance of Spoken-English skills and the role of the Jamia in providing these skills to its students. A respondent, who previously mentioned Spoken-English skills to be an integral part of labor market requirements, mentioned that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar was also providing them with clarity in learning these skills.

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar mein Islami taleem ke sath sath dunyawi aur angrezi taleem di hai*

Translation:

Jamia tu Al-Kauthar has provided us with the knowledge of both Islam as well as the contemporary and English language - *Ali (online teaching)*

*Jamia ke andar angrezi zuban ka sikhana is baat ka wazay saboot hai ke is Jamia ne buhat si maharaton ko hasil karne ke liye mauqay faraham kiye hain*

Translation:

Teaching English language in this Jamia is the solid proof of the fact that this Jamia has provided us with various means to achieve skills - *Muhammad (online teaching)*

Talking about the online platform that the respondents took advantage of, they explained the role of the institute in making them capable enough to practice online skills including practicing E-commerce, teaching online, and managing technologies. Jamia tu Al-Kauthar imparted online technological skills among its graduates that helped them in their jobs, according to the majority of the respondents.

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar ne aik platform aur direction di hai education system ki soorat mein ke jisko dekh ke kafi tulba online education de rahe hain aur iske ilawa buhat se tulba e-commerce mein kaam karahe hain*

Translation:

Jamia tu Al-Kauthar has provided us with a platform and a direction in the form of education system, which has motivated many students to teach online.

Apart from this, many students are now working in E-commerce - *Rehman (online teaching)*

### **Curriculum/Syllabus of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar:**

While sharing the perceived role of the Jamia in provision of market-oriented skills, the respondents shared their views on the current curriculum and syllabus of their institute that is also prevailing among other madrassas of Pakistan. According to only a few of them, there was a range of positive features of the curriculum that helped in labor force participation, including problem-solving skills.

*Is nisab ke baad seekhne ki silahiyyat ka wo satah ho jata hai ke ki field ya shoba mushkil nahi mehsoos hota har maharat seekhne ki amadgi ajati hai*

Translation:

After studying his curriculum, we get to such a standard of learning that no field or occupation feels difficult to us. We are motivated to learn new skills -

*Raza (religious teaching)*

*Syllabus ne hamara damagh khola jiski waja se ham nokri ke kaamo mein mushkilat ko apni aqal ka istemal karte hue hal karne ke qabil hue hain*

Translation:

This syllabus has opened up our thinking abilities due to which we are able to solve different kinds of problems that we face in jobs, using our minds -

*Babar (online teaching)*

A respondent opined that although the syllabus of the institute met the standards, yet it was not used in a realistic and useful manner.

*Kisi bhi idaray ka syllabus aik seerhi ki haisiat rakhta hai. Jamia tu Al-Kauthar ka syllabus aik had tak kafi tha ke agar ise haqeeqi tor per istafada kiya jata tou mjhe rozgar ke hasool mein kisi kisam ki mushkilat ka samna na hota*

Translation:

The syllabus of any institute plays the role similar to that of a staircase. The syllabus of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar was enough to a limit that if it were to be used realistically, I would not have faced any kind of difficulty in getting a job

*- Tariq (online teaching)*

Respondents also shared that the curriculum was helpful in equipping them with English language skills and Computer-operating skills.

*Ilmi maharat aur maiyar ko faraham karne mein is taleemi nisab ka buhat kirdar tha kyunke ilmi maharat ko parhanay ke liye Urdu ke sath English seekhna hoti hai jo ke muyasar hai. Doosra online seekhne ke liye computers bhi maujood hain is idaray mein*

Translation:

This curriculum played a positive role in providing us with knowledge specialization, because for teaching Knowledge, you need to be proficient in Urdu as well as English. And this, they teach us well. Moreover, Computers are also available for us to learn online skills - *Muhammad (online teaching)*

Among the minority of the respondents who shared positive aspects of the curriculum, mostly contended that the curriculum was helpful for those who wanted to work in Madrassas as *mudarris* or *khateeb*. However, if any other occupation was to be selected, they were not sure if the curriculum would help them or not.

*Agar aik taalib e ilm taleem mukammal karne ke baad madaris mein mudarris ke tor pe kaam karta hai ya khitabat ikhtiyar karta hai tou is taleem ka buhat had tak faida hota hai. Aur agar taalib e ilm apna karobar ya koi bhi doosra kaam shuru karta hai tou phir kaam ki noyat par munhasir hai ke uloom is kaam mein madadgar sabit horahe hain ya nhi*

Translation:

This curriculum is very helpful for a student, if s/he wants to pursue his/her career in Madrassas as an Educator or Lecturer. However, if a student wants to start a Business or some other occupation, then it depends upon the nature of work whether it will be useful for them or not - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

#### **4.2.2.2 Perceived Limitations**

Where most of the respondents shared their perceptions regarding the positive role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in enabling them for labor force participation, some of them also shared their critical perception to identify the gaps and limitations to make space for further improvements in the institute. Some gaps were related to the language of service delivery in the institute.

*Isme koi shak nhi ke Jamia tu Al-Kauthar hamein umeed se zyada ilm muhaiya karta hai aur muashre mein jis ilm ki parchar k zarurat hai jaded taqazon ke mutabiq, is hawalay se bhi koi kami nhi. Agarche kuch chezon ki kami hai jo ke poore Pakistan ke madaris mein hai. Agar ye kami poori ki jaye tou buhat acha hoga. Arabi aur Farsi Department banayein aur Usataza classes bhi Arabi aur Farsi mein lena shuru karein. Tehqeeqi, Tadreesi aur Tableeghi umoor mein tulba ki achi tarha rehnumayi karein*

Translation:

No doubt that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar provides us with knowledge that is consistent with the contemporary requirements and is more than what we

expect. However, there are some gaps as well that are prevailing in the Madrassas all over Pakistan; if filled, things would get much better. Department of Arabic and Persian Languages must be established and the teachers should take classes in the same languages. Moreover, the students should be engaged in Research, Teaching, and Preaching activities more - *Ali* (online teaching)

Where some gaps were identified, few respondents were of the view that their institute did not provide them with any market-oriented skills at all.

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar ne jadeed daur ki naukri karne ke liye maharatein nhi muhaiya ki*

Translation:

Jamia tu Al-Kauthar did not provide skills relevant to the modern job market - *Ameer* (regular teaching)

*Deeni taleemi nisab mein darkar ilm ke hasool ke liye salahiyat thi aur zaruriyat faraham ki hain. Lekin amlī maharat mein koi khaas kirdar dekhne ko nahi mila*

Translation:

The curriculum had the ability to deliver the required religious knowledge. However, I did not see any specific feature related to the practical skills - *Bilal* (regular teaching)

According to some of the respondents, the institute did not deliver the education required to compete in the job market.

*Jamia ki taleem jadeed rozgar ke hawalay se zaruriyat poora karne mein saw feesad kirdar ada karne se qasir hai. Kyunke yahan par ilmi funoon par zor zyada diya jaa hai jabke funoon ke hawalay se iqdamat tasalli baksh nhi hain*

Translation:



Jamia tu Al-Kauthar is unable to deliver 100% market-oriented skills because it focuses more on knowledge-oriented skills, whereas the practical aspect is not satisfactory - *Jafar (online teaching)*

Respondents shared that the curriculum content was not satisfactory and up-to-date, due to which they were unable to meet the requirements of the contemporary labor market.

*Jamia ki di hui taleem hamari umeed ke mutabiq jadeed rozgar ki zaruriyat par mabni nhi hai kyunke is hawalay se Jamia ko naye iqdamat karne honge. Aur muashre ki zaruriyat ke sath tulba ki zaruriyat aur amli maharaton ko samne rakhte hue aik naya nisab banana hoga, jabke ye nisab kafi toolani, takrari aur purana hai*

Translation:

Education provided by the Jamia was not according to our expected standards consistent with the needs of the contemporary labor market. For this reason, Jamia will need to revise its curriculum. It must consider the needs of the society as well as the students, and the practical skills needed today, to revise and design a new curriculum. The current syllabus is repetitive and old now - *Ali (online teaching)*

Similarly, another respondent shared that the content of the curriculum was not based on the requirements of the contemporary market.

*Amooman madaris ke taleemi nisab ilmi maharat aur zaruriyat ko poora karne se qasir hain. Kyunke ye nisab sirf ilmi hai jabke aj ka zamana funoon aur science par gamzan hai*

Translation:

Usually, the curricula of Madrassas these days are unable to fulfil the need to provide specialized skills. Because the curricula are based more on knowledge only, whereas the contemporary era is based on Arts and Sciences - *Haseeb (online teaching)*

While explaining about their views on the content delivery methodology, some of the respondents shared that improvement in the content delivery of the syllabus would lead to better learning outcomes. Their view was that the content delivery methods were not up-to-the-mark at their institute.

*Agar issi nisab ko achi tarha parhaya aur samjhaya jaye tou insan kamyab  
hosakta hai*

Translation:

If the same curriculum is taught and delivered effectively, one may succeed -  
*Babar (online teaching)*

*Mein syllabus ke khilaf nhi hun albatta tareeqa kar se thora ikhtalaf rakhta  
hun*

Translation:

I do not have any objection on the syllabus; however, I differ from the way it  
is delivered to us - *Ali (online teaching)*

#### **4.2.3 Degree Awarded by Wafaq ul Madaris and Job-seeking**

During their interviews, the respondents shared the difference they had felt and perceived between the degrees awarded by the Wafaq ul Madaris and HEC. A majority of the respondents shared that the degree provided by the Jamia (i.e., accredited by Wafaq ul Madaris) is helpful only in jobs related to religious teaching in Madrassas. To pursue teaching career in regular universities or colleges, one has to go for another degree that is provided by other regular Universities recognized by HEC.

*Sirf Jamia ki taleem mukhtalif deegar idaron mein nahi chalti, haan mukhtalif  
Madaris ki had tak aur wo bhi jaga mil jae warna wo bhi muhaal hai. Haan  
deegar taleemi idaron aur university ki taleem rozgar mein madad gar hai.  
Albatta Wafaq ki degree bhi qabil e qabool hai*

Translation:

Education by the Jamia only does not work in other institutions; but it does help in working in other Madaris (that too if we get a vacancy which is very difficult). However, Education from other educational institutions and Universities does help in labor force participation - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

Most of the respondents went for degrees other than the one provided by Jamia. Because according to their perceptions and experiences, the Wafaq ul Madaris degree was not enough and acceptable for many jobs in the labor market. Almost all of the employers required degrees from the contemporary education system.

*Rozgar ke hawalay se maujooda raij taleemi asnad ka hasil karna buhat zaroori hai. Is liye mein ne deeni taleem ke sath sath maujooda raij taleemi asnad hasil ki jese F.A, B.A, aur Masters in Education, aur mukhtalif courses kie jese Computers aur Languages.*

Translation:

It is very important to get a degree from the contemporary educational institutes in order to get a job. That is why apart from the religious education, I earned other degrees as well such as F.A, B.A., Masters in Education, and other courses like Computers and Languages - *Ali (online teaching)*

*Jamia se farigh ul tehseel honey ke baad hasil ki gayi deegar asnad par hi aik talib e ilm ko job milegi kyunke Jamia ki sanad job ke liye qabil e qabool nhi hai*

Translation:

A student can only get a job after getting other degrees after graduating from the Jamia because the Jamia's degree is not acceptable in the job market -

*Tariq (online teaching)*

*Jamia tu Al-Kauthar se farigh hone ke baad koi aisi sanad hona zaruri hia jiske balbote par ham agay nikal saken. Kyunke Jamia se farigh hone ke baad hamare pas koi aisi sanad na thi jiski bunyad pe ham agay nikal saken, jab hamare paas doosri asnad ay tab hi ham agay nikal sake hain*

Translation:

It is necessary to get other degrees after graduating from Jamia tu Al-Kauthar, on the basis of which we may succeed. Because after graduating from the Jamia, we did not have any such degree on the basis of which we could succeed. We were only able to thrive when we received other degrees - *Azeem (online teaching)*

Some of the respondents shared that they had to go for other degrees apart from the one received from Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in order to apply for the Government jobs in educational institutions.

*Rozgar ke liye doosri asnad buhat zaroori hoti hain kunke inhi asnad ki waja se ham government ke kisi bhi idaray jo ilmi halqon se jurray hain wahan apply karsakte hain*

Translation:

Other degrees are very important for jobs/livelihood because it is due to those degrees that we are able to apply in the Government-led educational institutions (for jobs) - *Jafar (online teaching)*

*Mere khayal mein deegar asnad ki zarurat sarkari nokri ke liye zaruri hain*

Translation:

In my opinion, it is necessary to have other degrees to get a government job - *Jafar (online teaching)*

The respondents opined that although the degree awarded by the Wafaq ul Madaris was helpful in religious education, it was necessary to get other degrees if one were to comply with the contemporary world and evolve with the changing times.

Another point of concern was that the degrees were helpful if one only aimed to receive education. However, they had to be complemented by degrees from regular educational institutes if one had to apply for jobs.

*Degree tou hasil ki hai yahan se magar lagta nhi ke karobar ya rozgar me koi faida hoga. Pakistan mein nokri ka milna buhat hi mushkil hogaya hai. Agar sirf education ke hawalay se dekha jaye tou faida hua hai, ilm hai kuch naya seekhne ko mila hai lekin abhi tak office wali nokri nhi mili*

Translation:

I have received a degree from here but I do not think it will help me in Business or Job. It has become immensely difficult to get a job in Pakistan. If we look only from educational perspective, yes it was beneficial and I learnt many new things. But still, I am unable to secure an office job - *Haider (online teaching)*

### **4.3 Impact of Religious Identity on Professional Interaction**

This section thoroughly explains the themes derived from the data through thematic analysis. The major theme under discussion is the impact of the religious identities of the respondents on their professional affiliations/interactions.

It must be kept in mind that all (100%) of the respondents of this study were engaged in the profession of teaching, either through online platforms, or physically in regular universities as well as religious institutes (refer to Table 4.1 for detailed overview of professional details of the respondents). Hence, their professional setting was mostly religious institutes, while only those who went for other degrees were teaching in regular universities. The respondents seemed eager to describe the impact of their affiliation with the Shi'a-educational institute on their professional identities and interactions. The following themes were derived from the collected data: Perceived Professional Prejudice, Impression of Knowledge, Preaching Opportunity, and Perceived Discrimination.

#### **4.3.1 Perceived Professional Prejudice**

Most of the respondents talked about the confidence and perceived prejudice they gained after graduating from the institute and in moving further towards their professional career. They described the institute as “one-of-a-kind” and “among the best Shi'a-educational institutes in the world”. According to them, whenever they were to introduce themselves as the graduates of this institute in a professional relationship, the opposite person would give more respect and

importance due to the distinguished stature of the institute among the religious educational institutes all over the world.

*Mere khayal mein ye idara meri peshawarana shanakht par buri tarha asar andaz nhi hua balke mere liye turra e imtiaz raha hai kyunke ye aik ghair siyasi taleemi idara hai aur mere liye ache tajruba ka bais bana hai. Balke ye idara peshawarana umoor mein mumid o muawan sabit hua hai*

Translation:

In my opinion, this institute has not negatively impacted my professional identity rather it has proven to be a distinguished and unique experience for me. Because it is a non-political educational institute, hence I have good experiences with it. This institute has proved to be extremely advantageous and beneficial in my professional activities - *Muhammad (online teaching)*

*Is idaray ka poore mulk mein aik naam hai lehaza hamari field se mutaliq jis sargarmi ke hawalay se bhi main jahan kahin bhi gaya hun sirf is idaray ka naam bhi mere liye kafi masbat sabit hua hai*

Translation

This institute has a name across the country; hence, whenever I go for any work related to our field, just the reference of this institute has proven to be quite beneficial for my professional activities - *Bilal (regular teaching)*

#### **4.3.2 Impression of Knowledge**

The respondents commendably described the impact of their affiliation with the Shi'a-led institute with professional success. According to them, the knowledge and skills imparted to them during their studies at the institute helped them in their professional lives. Introducing themselves with reference to the Shi'a-educational institute not only added to their respect and self-confidence but also enhanced their stature in their professional gatherings, especially with respect to knowledge. This further facilitates them in maintaining a sound professional identity.

*Jab kaha jata hai ke mein is idaray ka taalib e ilm raha hun tou samne wala khud muhtat hojata hai aur logon mein aik ilmi etimad barh jata hai kyunke*

*Pakistan mein ye buhat barra madrassa hai jis ki apni shanakht hai, lehaza peshawarana shanakht ke liye buhat asani hoti hai*

Translation

When we say that we are the graduates of this institute, the opposite person automatically becomes careful because there is a public trust in this institute regarding knowledge. This is one of the largest madrassas in Pakistan and owns a distinct identity; hence, it helps us a lot in maintaining our professional identities - *Hafiz (religious teaching)*

Most of the respondents reported that their professional networks would always regard their knowledge. May it be their students or fellow teachers, affiliation with the Shi'a-educational institute has positively impacted their professional identities.

#### **4.3.3 Preaching Opportunity**

Most of the respondents found it to be a 'divine opportunity' to spread and communicate their Shi'a faith and identities in their professional environment. Taking an advantage of their affiliation with the largest Shi'a-education institute in Islamabad, they would feel pride in preaching and proselytizing their professional affiliates to their own religious doctrines.

*Shi'a idaray mein tarbiyat hasil karne ka asar ye hua ke hamein har jaga apne mazhab ko puhanchanay ka mauqa milta tha aur ishkalat ka bharpoor jawab dete aur ulta un par ilmi tor pe aur dalail ke sath hamla awar hue Alhamdulillah har waqt surkhroo raha. Aur buhat saaron ke nazriyat tabdeel karne mein kamyab hue*

Translation

The impact of getting trained from a Shi'a-led institute was that we got the chance to spread our religion everywhere, and answer all sorts of questions and in return attack them with knowledge and referential debates. Thanks to Allah I am honored and successful in changing the viewpoints of many - *Raza (religious teaching)*

The respondents indeed found a platform to tell others about their religious views through this institute; however, their education from the institute also taught them how to communicate in a graceful and friendly manner. According to them, it was equally important to be eloquent and graceful in order to make your argument more persuasive. Effective communication was found to be a key to make convincing points.

*Mere khayal se is idaray ne hamein sikhaya hai ke guftugu ko ache andaaz se kese paish kiya jaye. Baat karne ka andaz acha ho ye buhat zaroori hota hai taake apki baat ki ehmiyat aur zyada barh jaye.*

#### Translation

In my opinion, this institute has taught us how to present your argument in a graceful manner. It is very important that your way of communicating must be effective so that your point of view is more valued by others - *Hamza (regular teaching)*

While the respondents earned the opportunity to spread and communicate their religious views through their professional affiliations, they also shared how they integrated their faith with teaching their students. For them, the affiliation of the institute with the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his household has become an exemplary inspiration for everyone to learn from their actions and sayings, and implement in their practical lives.

*Is idaray ne jis andaaz mein Muhammad o Aal e Muhammad (saw) ki tableegh aur tarweej ke liye kaam kiya hai wo logon ke liye misaali namoona hai. Dunya ke kone kone me iske asraat ka mushahida karne ke baad ap khud hi inki fayazat se mutasir hojaye ge. Beshak school college ho ya hamara samaj, is idaray ke zariye se hamein seekhne, sikhana aur apne khayalat ko shagirdon tak puhanchanay ka bharpoor zariya muyasar hua hai*

#### Translation

The way this institute has preached the cause of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his household, it has been an exemplary sample for everyone. You will be impressed by the contributions of this institute in every place. May it be school and college level, or our society, through this institute we got the



chance to learn, teach, and express our religious views with our students -

*Tariq (online teaching)*

#### **4.3.4 Perceived Discrimination**

The last theme of this objective found out how the respondents felt socially excluded in some professional environments when they would disclose about their affiliation with the Shi'a-educational institute. Some of the respondents claimed that their professional identities went through a compromise due to their belonging to a Shi'a-educational institute. This became prominent to them when people sidelined them or expressed abrupt reaction when they told about their education from this institute.

*Shi'a idaray se munsalik hone se hamein khushi mehsoos hoti hai kyunke ham jahan jatay hain, hamari peshawarana aur samaji pehchan banti hai. Lekin kuch loag hote hain jo is idaray ka naam sun kar ham se qata taaluq aur guftugu se guraiz bhi karte hain jiski waja se hamari peshawarana shanakht mutasir hoti hai*

Translation

I feel happy after being affiliated with this Shi'a-educational institute because it creates my professional as well as social identity. Yet still there are people who stop talking or maintaining contact with us, due to which our professional identity is negatively affected - *Bilal (regular teaching)*

Some of the respondents were of the view that they need to adopt a subtle approach in certain professional environments (such as meeting new colleagues or while approaching their supervisors) due to their affiliation with this institute. They feared that their religious affiliation would affect their professional relationships, and for this reason they would introduce themselves after analyzing the nature of the person they are interacting with.

*Aksar hamein ehtiyat ke sath apna deeni taaruf karwana hota hai take hamari peshawarana qabliyat pe asar na ho. Iska dar o madaar samne walay ke khayalat pe hota hai aya wo hamare deeni khayalat se mutafiq hai ya nhi*

Translation

Usually, we need to be careful while introducing ourselves with our religious views so that our professional capabilities are not (negatively) affected. This depends upon the person we are interacting with, whether (s/he) is bothered by our religious views or not - *Ameer (regular teaching)*

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter introduces the readers to the themes that were derived from the raw data. They are as follows:

**Table 4.2** Summary of Results

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Description</b>
Jamia tu Al-Kauthar and Labor Force Participation	Market-oriented Skills	Computer operations, online technology, digital skills, spoken-English, scientific knowledge, convincing power, Arts, and business administration skills
	Role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in Provision of Market-oriented Skills	<u>Strengths</u> : Provision of knowledge, practical skills, curriculum/syllabus <u>Limitations</u> : Poor content delivery language and methodology, lack of market-oriented skills, degraded curriculum content
	Degree Awarded by Wafaq ul Madaris and Job-seeking	Irrelevance of the degree in contemporary/non-religious job market
Impact of Religious Identity on Professional Interaction	Perceived Professional Prejudice	Distinguished stature of the institute among the religious educational institutes leading to professional prejudice
	Impression of Knowledge	The institute is well-renowned to impart knowledge to its graduates
	Preaching Opportunity	‘Divine opportunity’ to spread and communicate their Shi’a faith and identities in their professional environment
	Perceived Discrimination	Belonging to a Shi’a-educational institute led people to express abrupt reactions or sidelining the graduates in professional settings

The first objective explains the following themes: Market-oriented skills, Role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in Provision of Market-oriented Skills (Strengths and Limitations), and Degree Awarded by Wafaq ul Madaris and Job-seeking. These themes are in accordance with the first objective of the study. A major portion of the responses contended that the institute was

providing the market-oriented skills. However, some respondents highlighted some gaps and holes in the alignment of the institute with the contemporary labor market. Moreover, the respondents also highlighted the extent to which the degree issued by Wafaq ul Madaris is relevant to the job market.

The second objective elaborates the following themes: Perceived Professional Prejudice, Impression of Knowledge, Preaching Opportunity, and Perceived Discrimination. These themes explain the second objective of the study. The dominant responses fell in the themes of Perceived Professional Prejudice, Impression of Knowledge, and Preaching Opportunity, while a minor portion of the responses were consistent with Perceived Discrimination.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study and their relevance to the theories applied as conceptual framework. The application of the Institutional Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory has been discussed, and whether the results conform to the theories or defy them.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

This study explored the perceptions of the graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar – a Shi’a-led Madrassa – regarding the role of this institute in their Labor Force Participation. The findings under this objective came out in the form of one main theme, “Jamia tu Al-Kauthar and Labor Force Participation”. This theme was split into further sub-themes, Market-oriented Skills, Role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in Labor Force Participation, and Degree Awarded by Wafaq ul Madaris and Job-seeking. The market-oriented skills that the respondents consider to be essential for labor force participation included Scientific Knowledge, Practical skills (digital skills, technological advancement, exposure to online platforms etc), Language skills (especially spoken-English and other modern languages), Specialization in specified fields, and Arts. In the context of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar, the respondents shared their perceptions on the enablers as well as the limitations of the institute in their LFP during their tenure at the Jamia. Lastly, they also shared their perceptions regarding the relevance of the degree obtained by Wafaq ul Madaris in the current labor market.

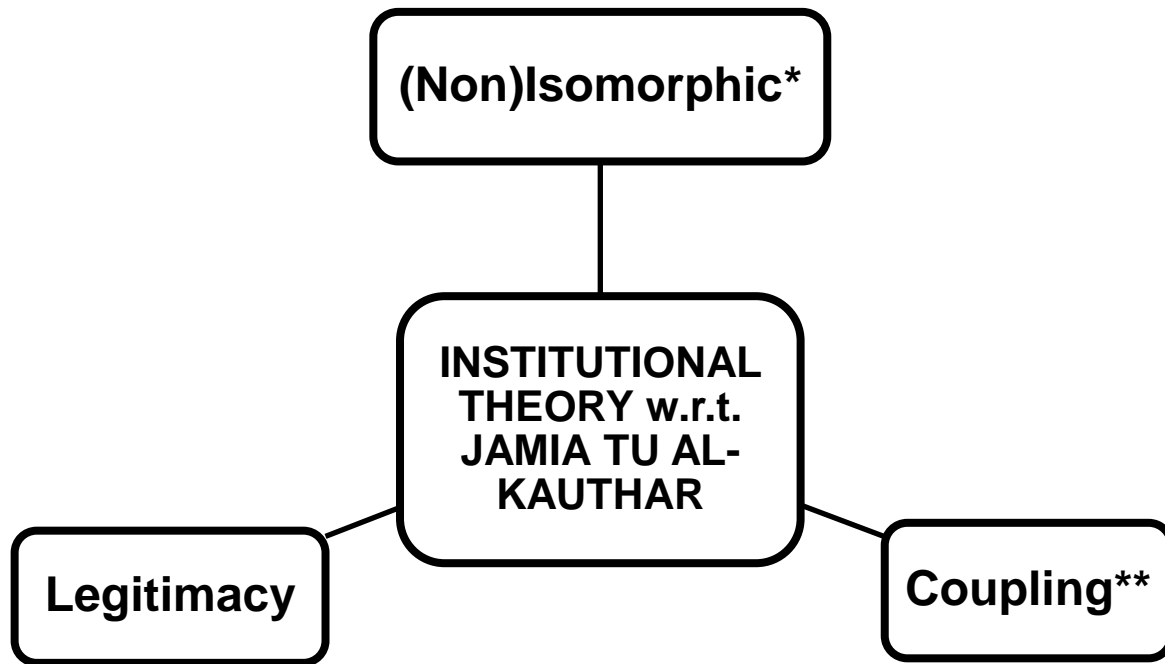
#### 5.3 Adaptation of Institutional Theory

This study applies the Institutional Theory developed in the early 1970s by John Meyer and Brian Rowan that contends that the expansion of educational institutions does not focus on meeting the demands put forth by the labor market. The terms of *‘legitimate’* and *‘ceremonial rituals’* are used to describe the approach of institutions to expand to maintain their legitimacy in their environment, rather as a result of the requirements of the workforce. To describe this process, he uses the term *‘isomorphism’* – institutions take up the selective qualities to align with their peers with the same conditions and make themselves legitimate (Robson, 2013a). Isomorphism, hence, is the institutional conformity to the norms, values, and technical

standards that are standardized by the institutional actors. Institutional theory, therefore, sees such educational institutions as “captive” systems—not abiding by the demands of labor market— and conformed to achieving standards not required to develop technical efficiency, but only to gain institutional acceptability (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). According to this study, most of the respondents shared their perceptions that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar provided them with the knowledge and skills that they thought were required to compete in the current labor market. Apart from the basic curriculum assigned by the Wafaq ul Madaris, the religious institute had a separate Department of English that taught the students and equipped them with spoken-English skills. In the contemporary labor market, along with English language skills, digital skills and computer literacy are among the other necessary requirements of the job market; the Jamia was found to be proficient in the provision of these skills as well. However, as this was the perspective collected from a specific population of the Jamia only (graduated and employed), it may be deduced that the institute was found to lie in between being “*isomorphic*” and “*non-isomorphic*”. The religious educational institute did take up the necessary qualities to align with its peers, adding extra features that were not present in other Madaris according to the respondents. However, as the respondents of this study also reported that they were unable to secure government jobs with the educational parameters of the Jamia, it cannot be deduced that the Jamia entirely expanded to develop technical efficiency and not institutional acceptability.

Meyer further talks about ‘*loose coupling*’, where the educational institutions are less mobilized by their need for technical efficiency and demand of attaining skills, but more by the need of meeting the popular belief of educational expansion and legitimacy. Hence, educational institutions are driven more by the institutional actors rather than the labor market demands (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). According to the findings of this study, it can be said that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar exhibits both “*loose coupling*” and “*tight coupling*” with the technical efficiency and practical skills, as the study suggests two ends to the perspective. One is that according to the respondents, it was found to deliver practical skills such as computer-operations, online technology, digital skills, spoken-English skills, teaching and research skills, and problem-solving abilities. In this context, it can be said that the institute was not found to be compliant with Meyer’s concept of “*loose coupling*”. Institutes may be expanding for the popular belief of expansion; however, the need of technical efficiency is also accounted for. Other similar studies also found that proficiency in English language skills had better economic returns in the labor market of Pakistan (Aslam, Bari, & Kingdon, 2010). Another study also

concluded that educational quality and labor market returns are directly linked to one another (Boccanfuso, Larouche, & Trandafir, 2015). On the other hand, the fact that some of the respondents from this sample (i.e., only those graduates who were employed) reported that they faced challenges while applying for jobs and securing good sources of income other than the teaching professions implies that the Jamia was not wholly mobilized by the technical needs, but also by the need to meet the popular belief of educational expansion and legitimacy.



*Figure 5.1* Adapted Framework of Institutional Theory\*,\*\*

#### 5.4 Adaptation of Relative Deprivation Theory

Secondly, the current study also aimed to explore the perceptions of the graduates regarding the impact of their religious identity and affiliation with the institute on their professional lives. This objective was studied under the conceptual framework of Relative Deprivation Theory. This theory is widely utilized to see the perceived discrimination of one individual/group

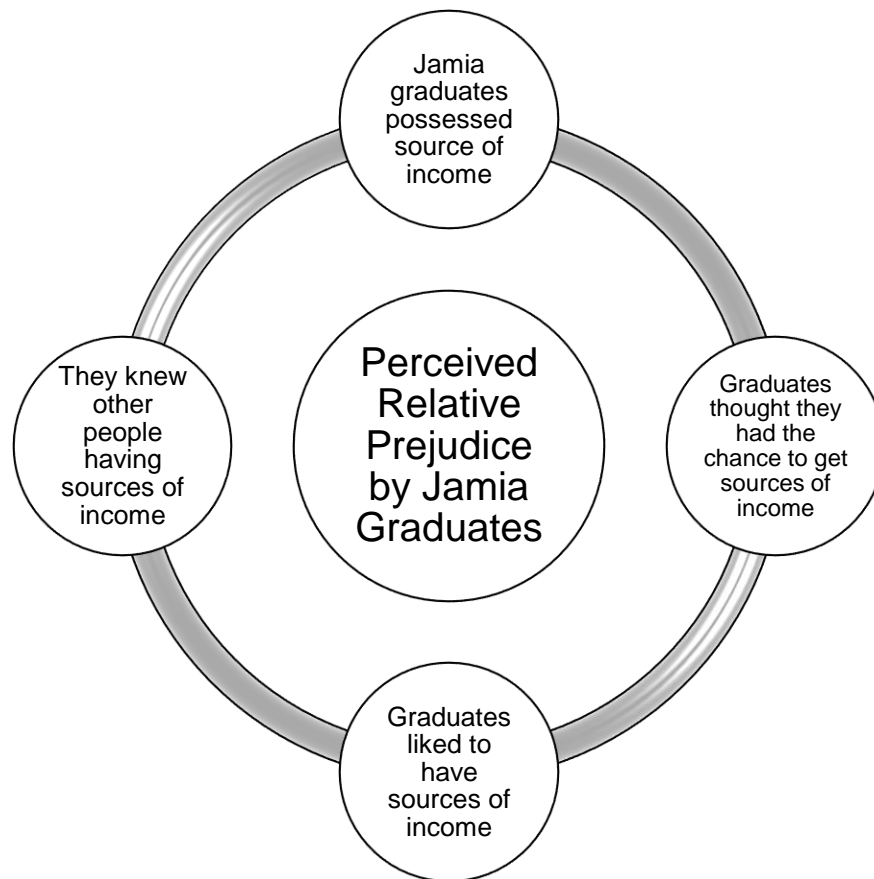
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\* As the perspective is being collected from a specific population of the Jamia only (graduated and employed), it may be deduced that the institute was found to lie in between being “*isomorphic*” and “*non-isomorphic*”.

\*\* The fact that some of the respondents from this sample reported that they faced challenges while applying for jobs other than the teaching professions, implies that the Jamia was not wholly mobilized by the technical needs, but also by the need to meet the popular belief of legitimacy. Hence, it can be said that Jamia tu Al-Kauthar exhibits both “*loose coupling*” and “*tight coupling*” with the technical efficiency and practical skills, as the study suggests two ends to the perspective.

relative to a reference individual/group in terms of material and immaterial assets. This theory emerged from “An American Soldier” by Stouffer (1949). Robert K. Merton (1950) also dealt with the same theory. To identify the reference groups for comparison, Merton selected three categories one of which includes “people with same or comparable social status”; in this case, people belonging to religious groups other than Shi’a-Islamic sect will become the reference group (Schulze & Krätschmer-Hahn, 2014). In summary, Relative Deprivation Theory clarifies the subjective distress due to the individual's relative status and opportunities to the status and opportunities for another. An individual starts to persistently relate his/her own position and circumstances to another's, when they stop feeling the pressure from the society to participate in it. From this meaning of relative deprivation, “poverty” and “social exclusion” emerge as two similar terms – which are usually used in Social Sciences to explicate the forms of economic, social, or political discrimination (Janse, 2020). According to the current study, most of the respondents perceived professional prejudice and enjoyed the ambience of the stature of their institute in the professional gatherings. As most of the respondents were engaged in teaching jobs (and mostly in religious settings), their graduation from Jamia tu Al-Kauthar helped them feel privileged due to the popular belief that the graduates of this institute are well-versed and well-informed in terms of Knowledge. They were more likely to perceive prejudice than relative deprivation among people belonging to religious groups other than the Shi’a sect. The four conditions given by Garry Runciman do not fulfil in this study; the respondents (Individual A) had jobs (object X), the respondents knew other people who have jobs, they also liked to have a good job/source of income, and they believed it to be realistic to have jobs. Hence, it can be deduced that the respondents of this study did not perceive relative deprivation in terms of wages or social interaction due to their religious identity.





**Figure 5.2** Adapted Framework of Relative Deprivation Theory

The academic sector of Pakistan consists of a number of religious institutes that produces ample graduates from time to time. If not employed, these graduates then become the cause of high unemployment rate persisting in Pakistan. This study attempted to explore a fraction of the perceptions of the graduates from an Islamic institute regarding their performance in the professional arena. According to the findings, the respondents of the study took pride in studying and graduating from an Islamic institute. Most of the respondents perceived that they did not face discrimination in their professional lives due to their affiliation with the Shi'a-educational institute. Rather, they enjoyed the privileges of the impression that the graduates of this institute are affluent in terms of knowledge and oratory. Due to the fame and recognition of the institute, the respondents felt confident in introducing themselves with the institute's reference. Moreover, others would often become more careful and vigilant before engaging in a debate with the graduates, due to the depth of their knowledge and skills. However, in a few cases only, some respondents shared that they perceived discrimination in the form of social exclusion.

## **5.5 Theoretical Contributions**

This study uses the “Institutional Theory” proposed by John Meyer and Brian Rowan. However, it does not conform to it and suggests that the sole purpose of most of the institutions is not their own interest and legitimacy while ignoring the technical needs of the people. The study shows that the technical needs of the Al-Kauthar graduates (i.e., provision of market-oriented skills, employment opportunities, educational degree etc.) were found to be fulfilled by the institute and they claimed to have been equipped by market-competitive skills. Therefore, institutes are not necessarily self-interest oriented.

However, as the locale is specified, these results cannot be generalized. Therefore, future researchers can explore at a wider level where there are multiple institutes that are subject to the study, and highlight the experience of the graduates. This can be specifically explored in the context of the current situation of the pandemic and online teaching methods. This can help in making institutions as suggested by John Meyer and Brian Rowan compatible, and improve those that are contributing in provision of technical skills.

## **5.6 Other Discussion Points**

The finding of this study relating to “preaching opportunity” is also consistent with a similar study conducted by Craft, Foubert & Lane (2011). The qualitative study was conducted through interviews of 12 Christian faculty members, to know how they integrated their religious identities with their professional environment. The study also concluded that the respondents thought it to be a “religious calling” when they got the opportunity to work and proselytize simultaneously. Moreover, they also expressed that they had to be subtle in preaching at times to avoid any negative circumstances (Craft, Foubert, & Lane, 2011).

However, some findings of this study are worthy of attention and discussion. Although a majority of the respondents have reported that their institution is well-managed in terms of technical standards and efficiency, there still are a few responses that contend that there are deficiencies that need to be improved for better learning outcomes and technical standard; ignoring these responses would be evidence of negligence. An important aspect to talk about is the “curriculum” of the religious institute. Most of the respondents had informed the researcher that the curriculum content helped in increasing their knowledge, enhancing spoken-English skills, computer literacy and problem-solving skills. However, some respondents were of the view that the curriculum was only helpful for those who wanted to pursue a career of an

Educator or Teacher. It was not helpful in terms of relevance and technicality for occupations in Business or any other in the contemporary labor market. This aspect direly needs attention, not at the institution but Board level, where the curricula of religious institutes are designed.

Another important finding of this study that needs attention from the relevant stakeholders is the degree awarded to the graduates of religious institutes. The respondents opined that although the degree awarded by the Wafaq ul Madaris was helpful in religious education, it was necessary to get other degrees if one were to comply with the contemporary world and evolve with the changing times. Furthermore, the degrees were helpful if one only aimed to receive education. However, they had to be complemented by degrees from regular educational institutes if one had to apply for jobs. This implies that the nature, status, and content of the degree awarded by the Wafaq ul Madaris (and Madrassas as a whole) should be revised to make them consistent with the contemporary era. The socio-demographics of the respondents also support the result that the graduates with religious qualifications were employed in online teaching or religious teaching professions in Madrassas only. While the 15% of the respondents who had done their MPhil degrees from regular universities were now teaching in regular universities in non-religious subjects. This finding is also consistent with the study conducted by Evans (2008) and Javaid (2012).

In this context, a significant difference was observed between the responses collected from those who were employed in regular universities and those who were engaged in religious teaching or in the Jamia itself. The former respondents were of the view that the skills necessary for the contemporary market include business administration, specialization in specific fields like Arts, Social Sciences, and managing technology; and that they perceived some limitations regarding the content and delivery methodology, and provision of these skills to compete in the labor market. However, the respondents who did not have the exposure to regular universities were more inclined towards knowledge, computer operations, and curriculum of the Jamia being sufficient enough to compete in the labor market. This finding suggests that the graduates of the Jamia who did not get a chance to expose themselves to the regular job market/universities were satisfied with the curriculum and delivery methods of the Jamia. On the other hand, those who were employed in the regular teaching profession noticed and perceived the limitations in the curriculum content, skills provided by the Jamia, and the degree issued by the Wafaq ul Madaris due to which they had faced challenges in moving upwards on the professional ladder. Hence, it is imperative to make further improvements at the

institutional level to enhance learning standards and increase opportunities for the students to achieve necessary and improved technical skills.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the relevance of the findings of this study to the Institutional Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory. This study does not conform to the Institutional Theory and hence is adapted to describe “*tight coupling*” and “*non-isomorphism*”. Furthermore, it does not conform to the Relative Deprivation Theory either. However, some findings of this research suggest points of improvements and consideration, and their consistency with previous studies.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Pakistan homes a variety and diversity of religious and ethnic groups. However, a substantial number of Madrassa graduates are unable to compete in the labor market as efficiently as the graduates of regular universities/educational institutes do. This leads to increasing rates of unemployment in the country and a large proportion of the ready-to-work Pakistani youngsters remain unemployed, or are employed in Madrassas as teachers or preachers. Therefore, to ensure the inclusion of Madrassa graduates in the labor force participation, it is necessary to align their curriculum and learning environment with the mainstream educational system of Pakistan and standardize the basic learning material.

This study employed a qualitative approach and aimed to explore the perceptions of the graduates of a Shia-led religious institute Jamia tu Al-Kauthar regarding their relevance to the contemporary labor market. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the study found that the perceived role of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar in labor force participation was somehow positive in the sense that the graduates were satisfied with the skills and knowledge they gained from it. But since they worked as teachers, they contended that their knowledge and curriculum was not suitable to work in the regular labor market and professions other than religious teaching in Madrassas. Hence, it is necessary to focus on policy and policy implementation to mainstream religious educational institutes, and improve the overall rate of labor force participation of Pakistan. Quality educational standards are necessary to set in order to ensure the economic as well as human development in Pakistan.

However, this study is an indicative study and cannot be generalized. Hence, this calls for more primary research over the topic to explore the gaps and recommend policy inclusion. Policy recommendations are majorly for the Government stakeholders controlling the Wafaq ul Madaris, under which the institute is registered. The degree issued by the Wafaq is not acceptable for regular jobs, however their credit hours are still as much as required by HEC. The respondents of the study recommended that the Wafaq resolve the issue with the Government and make their degrees equivalent to MPhil and PhD according to the credit hours covered. Also, the Madrassa Board must allocate quotas for Madrassa students in public sector jobs, and have affiliations with conventional educational institutions to enhance industry linkages.

## CHAPTER 7

### POLICY RELEVANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the policy implications of the current study. National Education Policy Framework has been selected and its challenges/gaps and recommendations have been discussed.

#### 7.2 Pakistan – National Education Policy

According to the Pakistan - National Education Policy Framework 2018, there are four major challenges that Pakistan faces in the way to improving the Education system of the country; these include facilitating Out of School Children (OOSC) and aiming that enrolled children do not drop out; providing uniform education for every child; ensuring quality education provision to every child across the country; and provision of technical skills training and tertiary education for labor market outcomes. The second challenge, i.e., uniform education system, also aims unification of the curriculum and textbooks across the educational institutes of Pakistan. According to the strategic priorities, this challenge is the second priority of the Government. Article 25A also stresses the need to establish a uniform and equitable system for all. Similarly, the fourth challenge, i.e., provision of market-relevant skills trainings, ranks at the fourth priority. (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018).

The National Education Policy 2021 is currently under progress by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. This time, the policymakers are inviting suggestions and recommendations from everyone across the nation to design the policy productively and inclusively. Call for Suggestions has been attached as Appendix C. (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2021).

#### 7.3 Challenges

According to a report, it was found that children graduating from regular schools/universities are more advantaged than children graduating from religious educational institutes, or Madrassas. Their differences included divergent curriculum, textbooks and learning material. This disadvantage also reflected in their starting salaries/wages (Azhar, et al., 2016). According to this study, the respondents reported that the content of the curriculum was mostly helpful

for them in attaining Knowledge and in pursuing careers in teaching, preaching, or educating in Madrassas. This implies that a large number of graduates in the religious educational institutions of Pakistan are incapable or ineligible of working in the regular labor market of Pakistan. Similarly, they are more likely to face wage implications when working in Madrassa settings as compared to the regular office jobs.

Moreover, although most of the respondents claimed to receive practical skills learning from Jamia tu Al-Kauthar, there were still a few of the respondents who said that they were unable to receive 100% market-oriented and practical skills required for the job market. In Pakistan, there are designated institutes for provision of Technical and Vocational Skills Trainings. Statistics show that only 0.315 million individuals are enrolled in TVET institutes, indicating that even these institutes are unable to provide technical and market-oriented skills to the young graduates of Pakistan. Fresh graduates who ought to enter the labor market are further impeded due to non-acquisition of technical skills (International Labour Organization, 2019).

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

Although the Pakistan National Education Policy Framework 2018 has already proposed the unification and standardization of the curriculum across all schooling systems, and set up a National Curriculum Council, yet the current study suggests a proper implementation on this policy framework for better labor force participation of the educated segment of Pakistan. This section of recommendations includes the suggestions put forth directly by the graduates of the institute, who are aware of the on-ground reality, for the policymakers in relevant Education Department:

- Madrassa graduates must be provided with equal employment opportunities in comparison to the regular graduates.
- Candidates should be given equal and religious bias-free chance of selection. For this, the selection panels must include panelists who ensure unbiased selection.
- The curriculum should be revised for religious institutes. The revised curriculum should include more practical and modern/non-religious courses like Computers, Information Technology, Communication Skills, Current Affairs, Social Sciences, Banking, Legal Studies, and E-commerce.

- Research must be made a compulsory course and quality research should be recognized at national and international levels.

Some of the most needed policy recommendations to the “Wafaq ul Madaris” are as follows:

- The M.A. degree awarded to the graduates of Jamia tu Al-Kauthar (and similar other Madrassas) cover credit hours equivalent to the required credit hours for HEC-recognized PhD degree. Hence, the Madrassa Board must resolve the matter with the Government and raise the status of their M.A degrees to MPhil and/or PhD.
- Madrassa Board should issue degrees that are acceptable by all institutes across the country.
- Madrassa Board must have some affiliations with the regular educational institutions (Universities) of Pakistan to enhance industry linkages.
- Government of Pakistan must allocate quotas for the Madrassa graduates in the public job sector.

On the other hand, another noteworthy aspect is to ensure provision of technical and market-oriented skills for better economic outcomes. Although there are designated institutes for this purpose in Pakistan, studies show that they are incapable of delivering market-oriented skills trainings, where about 1.8 million individuals are ready to enter the labor market each year (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018). Hence, the current study recommends the policymakers to devise a new strategy in the upcoming National Education Policy 2021, where the students (Madrassa students in this study) in all types of educational settings (i.e. public, private and Madrassas) attend compulsory courses of technical and vocational skills training as part of their curriculum. This can also be done by signing agreements with the relevant TVET institutes to offer compulsory subjects to the students at tertiary level before they graduate and enter the labor market. This will reduce the incompetency rate of the newly graduated citizens of Pakistan and increase the economic returns. Moreover, this initiative will equip the students through their educational institutions rather than putting collective burden on the government-run TVET institutes.



Since as found, the single curriculum has not yet been properly implemented, there seem to be certain aspects that need to be addressed for the proper implementation of the National Policy Framework 2018:

- There needs to be sufficient investment in the education sector rather than mere drafting of a number of strategies and policies to resolve the issue of educational discrimination. This means that the policy should be complemented with training of the teachers of the educational institutes including public schools, private schools, and Madrassahs for provision of quality education as this would not be effective otherwise
- Another possible hurdle in proper implementation of the policy is the provincial educational authority as per the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. The policy should be made province-specific i.e., a basic requirement of the curriculum shall be drafted, and provincial authorities shall ensure its fulfillment by all the types of educational institutes through their suggested curriculum
- Educational disparity is not only caused by difference of curricula, but also due to poverty as there are many children who never get a chance to attend any type of schooling due to lack of finances. Therefore, the National Policy Framework should also focus on the enrollment of the students along with the unification of the curriculum in order to reduce educational discrimination as a whole.

## **7.5 Summary**

This chapter discussed Pakistan's National Education Policy Framework 2018 and identified the gaps (such as acknowledgement of the need for unified education system but no implementation). Hence, this chapter has recommended proper implementation of the policy with special focus on equal opportunities for Madrassa students in the job market; recognition of their degrees to the MPhil and PhD levels according to credit hours covered; quota system in government jobs; and provision of TVET skills during academic courses.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview Guide**

Interview Guide is being attached with reference to 2.2.3.

1. Why did you decide to enroll yourself in this particular institute?
  - a. Is it due to your personal choice, or due to your affiliation with the Shi'a sect?
2. How confident are you in your institute and the quality of its education?
  - a. Did you think your affiliation with this institute would lead you to a successful career during your studies? What is your view now after graduation and being employed?
  - b. Did you think your degree would help you in securing position in the labor market? Did it actually help you in securing a job, or did you have to go for a side-course (diplomas, courses etc) to get a job?
  - c. In your opinion, does your education apply to religious workforce or the conventional jobs as well? And what did you expect during your academic tenure in the institute in terms of future employment?
  - d. Did you want to pursue a religious or other conventional roles as a professional? Do you think your degree played a relevant role in pursuing your desired job, how? If other roles too, do you think your degree played a positive or a negative role and how?
3. In terms of the curricula of your studies, how would you evaluate its relevance to your job prospects?
  - a. Do you perceive that it involved a balanced content to couple religious education with technical and/or social skills? Did the curriculum include practical periods as well?
  - b. Do you think that the curricula proved to help you during recruitment process?
  - c. What improvements would you suggest to make your curriculum more market-oriented?

4. Do you think that the teachers/lecturers were adequately skilled?
  - a. Do you think they were resourceful enough to help you acquire practical knowledge of the job market/industry?
5. Did your institution provide a platform for extra-curricular activities as well?
  - a. If no, do you think they were necessary in succeeding as a professional?
  - b. If yes, what kind of activities?
  - c. Were they helpful in imparting the skills that are required in the job market? Did they enhance your social capital (networks, market-relevant exposure etc.)?
  - d. Do you think that the institution linked you to recruiters?
6. If you were to pursue higher education again, would you go for Al-Kauthar institute in terms of its relevance to the job market?
  - a. If yes, please highlight the most helpful qualities of the institute in making its graduates competent?
  - b. If no, what suggestions would you give to help the institute become market-relevant for its future graduates?
7. Do you think that your affiliation with Al-Kauthar institute, as it is affiliated with a minority religious sect of Pakistan, has created an impact on your professional identity? In what ways?
  - a. Do you think your affiliation with this institute conflicts with the prevailing secular policies in the job market? Did you experience any?
8. What would you recommend to the policy-makers to improve labor force participation for graduates of religious institutes in Pakistan?

## APPENDIX B

### Consent Form

#### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to study the perceptions of Jamia Al-Kauthar graduates regarding the role/impact of the institute on their participation in the labor force. It focuses on their perceptions about the role that Al-Kauthar institute plays in their participation in the job market. This research also focuses on the perceptions of the graduates regarding the trends they notice in affiliation with Jamia tu Al-Kauthar while also being an active player in the job market.

اس تحقیق کا بنیادی مقصد جامعۃ الکوثر کے فارغ التحصیل افراد کے ان کے روزگار/ ملازمت میں ان کے تعلیمی ادارے کا کردار/ اثرات کے بارے میں تاثرات جاننا ہے۔ یہ جامعہ سے ڈگری حاصل کرنے والے شاگرد کے روزگار پر جامعہ کے اثرات پر توجہ ڈالتا ہے۔ جامعہ سے وابستہ ہونے کے باعث جامعہ سے فارغ التحصیل افراد نے ملازمت کے دوران جو رجحان محسوس کیا ہے، یہ تحقیق ان خیالات کو ج بھی جانے گی۔

#### Participant Details

Name: نام

Age: عمر

Religious Qualification: اہلیت: / دینی تعلیم

Contemporary Education: دور حالیہ کی تعلیم:

Year of Graduation from Jamia Al Kauthar: جامعۃ الکوثر سے فارغ التحصیل ہونے کی تاریخ:

#### Informed Consent اجازت نامہ:

I agree to participate in this research keeping my identity confidential. This information will be used for the researchers' thesis, and may be further used in publication with disguised identity of the Jamia and the respondents.



اپنی شناخت کو خفیہ رختے ہوئے میں اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے پر راضی ہوں۔ یہ معلومات محقق کے تھیسس کے لیے استعمال ہوگی، اس کے علاوہ اشاعت میں جامعہ اور اس تحقیق کے جواب دہندہ کی خفیہ شناخت کے ساتھ بھی استعمال ہو سکتی ہے۔

دستخط: Signature:

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## APPENDIX C

### Pakistan – National Education Policy 2021

With reference to section 8.2 of this study, National Education Policy 2021 is open for suggestion.



The advertisement features a large orange arrow pointing downwards on the left, containing the text "First Time Ever Every Pakistani made Policymaker of Pakistan". To the right is an illustration of a computer monitor displaying a document titled "Education Policy 2021", with a graduation cap, a magnifying glass, and several colored pencils. Below the arrow, the text "Open consultation begins for" is written in black, followed by a stylized pencil with a green and white wrapper that incorporates the Pakistani flag. To the right of the pencil, the words "Pakistan Education Policy 2021" are written in large, bold, green and blue letters. At the bottom, an orange banner contains the text "Everyone's suggestion counts for national harmony and inclusive future!".

**First Time Ever  
Every Pakistani made  
Policymaker  
of Pakistan**

Open  
consultation  
begins for

**Pakistan  
Education  
Policy  
2021**

Everyone's suggestion counts for national harmony and inclusive future!

**Be part of this historic process.**

Email your suggestions at  
[pakistaneducationpolicy2021@gmail.com](mailto:pakistaneducationpolicy2021@gmail.com)



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND  
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**  
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN