Shaping Responsible Student Mindsets: Teaching Methods, Islamic Ethics, and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

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Abstract

Higher education plays a critical social role in shaping students' values, ethical awareness, and socially responsible behaviour, particularly in emerging economies. This study examines the influence of teaching methods on students' social responsibility, considering ethical awareness as a mediating variable. Drawing on social learning theory and Islamic ethical principles, including justice, trust, and collective welfare, the research investigates how pedagogical approaches promote ethical and socially responsible behaviour among university students. A survey-based research design was employed, collecting data from undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in business and social science programs at public and private universities in Pakistan. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS, which allowed the assessment of direct and indirect relationships between constructs and tested the mediating role of ethical awareness. The findings indicate that interactive and value-oriented teaching methods, including discussion-based learning, case studies, and reflective pedagogy, significantly enhance students' ethical awareness, which in turn strengthens their social responsibility. Ethical awareness partially mediates the relationship between teaching methods and social responsibility, highlighting its critical

role as a conduit through which pedagogy translates into socially responsible behaviour. The study contributes to the literature by integrating teaching methodology with ethical and cultural frameworks, offering practical insights for curriculum design and policy development aimed at producing socially responsible graduates in emerging economies.

Keywords: Teaching Methods; Islamic Ethics Awareness; Social Responsibility; Higher Education; Social Learning Theory; PLS-SEM; Emerging Economy; University Students

1. Introduction

As an important social institution, universities are now being acknowledged not only to play the role of unveiling disciplinary knowledge but also the role of influencing ethical worldviews of students and their socially responsible conduct. Higher education is supposed to enhance sustainable development in an era where the social challenges are highly complex by producing graduates who are reflective, conscious about Islamic ethics, and dedicated towards the benefit of the people (Chan and Chen, 2022). The role of higher education goes beyond cognitive education to moral and social education which makes students prepared to make decisions based on awareness of issues about Islamic ethics, decisions that are fraught due to issues that arise in professional life as well as community life. This wide scope corresponds with the international theoretical paradigms that emphasize civic and societal duties of universities (Declaration, 2005), and previews the relevance of values education as being central to tertiary teaching and learning.

Ethical Socialisation and Teaching Methods:

Universities use pedagogical strategies in the implementation of this broadened mission. Although basic content delivery of traditional lecture-based instruction is effective, it has been criticised as having a low ability to ensure that students are involved in ethical thinking or social implications of the contents learned (Cui et al., 2024). Conversely, the methods of teaching that engage more include interactive and experiential teaching, i.e., case-studies, group discussions, role-playing, and reflective assignments (Awan and Thakur, 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2022). The methods put the students in the role of the passive consumers of the information rather than active agents of the meaning-making processes that would place academic content in the ethical and societal contexts. The interactive pedagogy has empirical evidence that it is valuable in the development of moral and ethical. Awan and Thakur (2025) found a massive positive change in the moral reasoning of university students who had interactive pedagogies as opposed to lecture-based instructional modes. According to their findings, practices that make students assess situations in which there is no apparent right or wrong might strengthen ethical involvement, improve perspective-taking, and stimulate reflective judgment, aspects that

are important in ethical consciousness. These pedagogical strategies correspond to the studies of the impact of active learning on student motivation and engagement. Rahmawati et al. (2022) discovered that there is an increased engagement and critical reflection among students when they use teaching models that involve the application of ethical dilemmas, which do not merely cover mastery of the content but also encompass moral reasoning skills. When students actively engage with learning content they encourage the synthesis of intellectual knowledge with moral thinking that leads to the internalisation of values and adherence to responsibly ethical behaviour.

Theoretical Why: Social Learning Theory:

Social Learning Theory is a potent theoretical framework that supports the links between teaching practices and ethical outcomes in learning institutions. The Social Learning Theory, which was initially explained by Bandura (1986), argues that people learn new behaviours, norms, and cognitive strategies through the use of observation, imitation, and modeling in a social setting. Learning does not only occur in the mind of a person in a vacuum, but it is an interactive process that takes place through the interactions with other people, particularly in the socially organized setting of a classroom. According to Bandura, in his Social Foundations of thought and action: A Social cognitive theory: (1986) theory, triadic reciprocal determinism is a factor as behaviour, personal factors (cognition and emotion) and environmental factors interact dynamically (Bandura, 1986). In a learning environment, instructional practices form a relevant environmental determinant, which constructs both cognitive and behavioural performances of students. Students need not just learn the content but internalise the values and decision-making behaviours exemplified by the instructors when they provide the modelling of ethical reasoning and allow a collaborative dialogue to take place. According to this model, learning conditions that would encourage observing ethical behaviour and reflective practice would promote ethical awareness, which is a crucial mediator of socially responsible action in students. Further, social learning as conceptualised by Bandura has self-regulatory processes including self-reflection and self-evaluation processes required to make ethical judgments (Bandura, 1986). The internal processes assist learners to shift the perceived behaviours into their own standards of behaviour, which is a reinforcement of the concept that ethical awareness is a result of social exposure and cognitive integration. Social learning processes can thus be an interesting perspective in studying how instructional practices can be used to shape the moral and social growth of students.

The Psychological Mediator: Ethical Awareness:

Ethical awareness is a cognitive-affective ability to identify ethical problem, assess the morality of judgments and morals into thought (Narvaez and Bock, 2014). It is a construct that is dynamic and entails a sensitivity to ethical dilemmas and the capability to give rational responses to moral dilemmas. Ethical consciousness in educational sphere allows students to connect theoretical learning with real-life ethical issues to promote moral reasoning, which is a part of a socially responsible behavior. The studies show that ethical awareness is not a fixed quality but may be developed with the help of conscious pedagogy. McKeachie and Svinicki (2013) state that being exposed to ethical issues in a learning process improves the moral sensitivity and moral judgment ability of the students. This is in line with research conducted in moral development which theorizes that moral reasoning skills are developed in students when instructional practices necessitate the application of critical evaluation, perspective-taking and open discussion. Indicatively, applying real ethical dilemmas in coursework offers the students the chances of thinking about consequences, stakeholders and values which are the processes that directly contribute towards the improvement of the ethical awareness. This is in line with longitudinal research which has found that educational interventions that incorporate interactive discussions and collaborative problem solving are linked to objective increase in the moral reasoning of students over time (Chan & Chen, 2022).

In principle, ethical awareness serves as an intermediary between the instructional experiences and socially responsible behaviour. In other words, pedagogical approaches affect the inner processing and awareness of the moral aspects in students, which consequently determines their preference to act responsibly in social situations. Therefore, ethical awareness is a very important psychological process by which the education practice can be converted into the socially adequate results.

Higher Education Social responsibility:

Social responsibility is a wider connotation whereby people have a responsibility and a promise to play in a positive manner towards the welfare of society. Social responsibility in the case of higher education implies both attitudinal and behavioural aspects, such as civic responsibility, ethical behaviours, community responsibility, and sustainable development devotion. There is a growing demand to integrate social responsibility into the set of educational outcomes at higher educational institutions, which believe that a graduate must not only be a specialist of some kind but also be passionate about their moral responsibility and serving the community (Severino-Gonzalez et al., 2024). The model of social responsibility has gained great popularity in research on university education, where the process of ethical growth is connected with the effects on society at

large. An example of this can be seen by Jach and Hankiewicz (2025), who found that student perception of institutional social responsibility activities is positively linked to their involvement in sustainable practices and ethical behaviour indicating that students internalise values archeted by their universities and enact them as a form of engagement behaviour. Likewise, Wu, Huang, Duan, Yang, and Han (2025) have discovered that awareness of social responsibility plays a crucial role in predicting the behavioural intentions of students towards civic and community participation, thus the significance of the role of higher education in facilitating active citizenship. Social responsibility is not limited to individual effects alone but to institutional commitments. The Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education explains a worldwide agreement that universities must entrench social responsibility in their basic missions, including the teaching and learning activities (Declaration, 2005). This viewpoint provides the importance of ethical and socially responsible graduates, not only as the desirable but as the key to the modern societal problems, environmental sustainability, as well as social justice and equity.

Mediational Model and the PLS-SEM:

In order to empirically test the hypothesised relationships between the teaching methods, ethical awareness and social responsibility, this research employs a mediational model whereby ethical awareness is an important mediating model. This model states that, through teaching methods, ethical awareness is directly targeted, which in turn impacts upon social responsibility. Furthermore, the social responsibility might have a direct influence on teaching methods other than the mediation process. The use of partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is motivated by a number of reasons. One, PLS-SEM is strong when it comes to testing complex relational models that include latent constructs, mediation effects, and multiple indicators per construct, which is a frequent trait in pedagogy and student outcomes research (Hair, J. F., 2014). Second, PLS-SEM is not sensitive to multivariate normality, which is why it is suitable to work with survey data that is often collected in research involving the educational field. Third, simultaneous measurement model quality (reliability and validity) and structural relationships are measured in this technique which gives a holistic understanding of the operationalisation of the constructs and the hypothesised relationships.

Contextual Relevancy: Higher Education in Emerging Economies:

The issue of higher education influencing the development of ethical and social orientations is especially critical in the context of the emerging economy with dynamic socio-economic issues like Pakistan. It has been argued that the development of moral

reasoning and social responsibility is not well supported by traditional pedagogical approaches that are commonly found in most universities (Awan and Thakur, 2025). Due to the increased worry regarding ethical violations of professional practice and tensions in the society, there is an imminent and pressing necessity to determine how learning experiences can help students develop ethical consciousness and social responsibility. Empirical research on the interactive pedagogies in these settings offers support that student-centred and reflective pedagogies offer greater benefits in ethical enhancement than traditional ones. As an example, ethical reasoning has been linked to superior moral thinking, including among Pakistani undergraduate students, when relying on interactive learning techniques, including role-playing and case-studies, implying that innovation in pedagogical methods is essential in promoting ethical and social performance (Awan and Thakur, 2025). These results support the necessity of a study that would combine the pedagogical theory, moral development, and measurement models that should be capable of reflecting the complex directions that learning environments can produce ethical and social consequences.

Significance of the Study:

This doctrine has many contributions to the scholarship. First, placing ethical awareness as a mediator, it builds theoretical insights into the ways in which the practices in pedagogy can contribute to socially responsible outcomes, i.e., bringing together cognitive and moral aspects of learning. Second, it uses PLS-SEM, which enhances methodological rigour in analysing complex relational models that involve mediational constructs. Third, it provides contextually engaging information to educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers by contextualizing the issue of higher education within the context of an emerging economy, which they may use to streamline teaching activities to meet larger social objectives. Knowledge of how instructional practices can be used to create ethically aware individuals and socially responsible ones has applied to the curriculum design, faculty training, and institutional policy. In the event that interactive and value-oriented pedagogies have proven to enhance the ethical sensitivity of the students and thus their social responsibility in relation to this students, institutions can more effectively justify their investments in pedagogical training, curriculum redesign and learning that focuses on the community. Finally, this study highlights the potential of higher education as a transformational area in which students do not only acquire disciplinary information but also acquire the moral and social skills that help them become responsible citizens and professional practitioners.

Research Objectives:

- To assess the effect of teaching methods on students' ethical awareness.
- To examine the relationship between students' ethical awareness and their social responsibility.
- To investigate the mediating role of ethical awareness in the relationship between teaching methods and social responsibility.

2. Literature Review

Teaching practices and pedagogical creativity in higher education:

The process of learning prompted by the pedagogical practice is the focal point in terms of the way students interact with learning content and acquire cognitive and affective competencies. In recent decades, researchers have become more critical of the method of didactic teaching, which makes students passive receivers of information, as having a low ability to develop critical thinking or moral growth (Cui et al., 2024). Active and interactive teaching, in turn, including problem-based learning, case discussions, and ethical dilemma models, has become increasingly popular in response to the need to further immerse students in the learning process and make them think in a more conscious way (Rahmawati et al., 2022). These methods are based on constructivist school of thought of learning which assumes that knowledge is constructed when learners engage in meaningful interaction with the tasks that close to the complexity of the real world (Cui et al., 2024). There is an increasing amount of literature in favour of the benefits of interactive pedagogies in higher education. As an example, Rahmawati et al. (2022) discovered that introduction of a teaching model based on ethical dilemma to the learning of chemistry with a STEAM-based model showed a significant improvement in the engagement and sustainability learning among students. This implies that those pedagogies that incorporate ethical dilemmas in their content provision not only enhance understanding of the subject matter but also encourage students to think about moral and societal implication of the academic matter (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Equally, Karamzadeh, Mosalanejad, and Bazrafkan (2021) established that blended learning methods in medical Islamic ethics incorporating problem-solving and group discussion were associated with better outcomes in problem-solving and moral reasoning of learners than the teacher-centred knowledge delivery methods. Interactive types of teaching seem especially applicable to moral and ethical aspects of educational experience in higher education settings since they provide a platform to discuss, to take on a different position, and to reflect collectively. This category of pedagogies is associated with instructional practices that support the learner autonomy principle, collective inquiry and genuine

problem exploration (Cui et al., 2024). The implication is that pedagogical design is important to the end outcomes in terms of more than just learning content; cognitive processes, value-consideration and abilities to think in complex ways about ethical issues are also influenced.

The Strategies of Instruction and the Moral Development:

The correlation between instruction and the moral development has been an issue of long time in the field of education. Moral development is the process of gaining the ability to think ethically and make principled decisions as well as behave in a certain way in line with moral values (Ghani et al., 2020). Some of the most common methods of teaching morals traditionally are based on lectures on ethical theories, which may not be converted to internalisation of moral reasoning or social responsibility by the students. Alternatively, as research has shown, inquiry, discussion, role plays, and reflective practice strategies have greater returns on moral thinking. As an example, a quasi-experimental study by Ghani et al. (2020) points out that such teaching methods as role plays, open-ended discussions, and moral dialogues are linked to better moral reasoning among Pakistani students. This justifies the need of implementing teaching methods that demand active learning and moral questioning as opposed to rote learning. Likewise, a study conducted on the comparison of problem-based learning and reflective practice in nursing students concluded that problem-based learning as an active pedagogical model was more effective in increasing moral sensitivity compared with reflective practices (Zia, Sabeghi, and Mahmoudirad, 2023). All these results highlight the fact that the instructional strategies can be highlighted as having a quantifiable impact on moral cognition among students and this has implications to the way universities make Islamic ethics and professional development curriculum. Peer interaction and social contexts are also dependent on morality development in higher education. In their narrative review of peer-based healthcare teaching of Islamic ethics, Hindmarch, Allikmets, and Knights (2015) found out that the peer teaching methods help students develop a deeper ethical comprehension through the development of collaborative reflection and feedback among learners. The organized engagement enables the students to express, debate, and sharpen their arguments in social settings that model professional and civic settings. This literature confirms the idea that pedagogical innovation other than lecture can help in the development of ethical reasoning and reflective skills in learners.

Ethical Consciousness: Theory and Teaching Basics:

Ethical awareness is a multidimensional concept that incorporates the awareness of ethical concerns, the knowledge of moral values, and the skills of formulating the

rationalized decisions regarding the situation that involves values. It is opposed to common knowledge about Islamic morals in that it focuses on the sensitivity to situational ethical subtleties and judgments (Narvaez and Bock, 2014). Ethical awareness in the case of education is regarded as the antecedent to ethical behaviour and social responsibility since it gives students the cognitive framework within which to make sense of ethical dilemmas and determine the right courses of action. Educational research proposes that ethical awareness occurs not only when a learner is exposed to the concepts of ethics but also when the learner experiences situations that cause him/her to use moral reasoning as a way of handling the situation. Longitudinal research suggests that educational interventions that include the discussion of real-life dilemmas and interaction with peers can be used to achieve long-term positive gains in ethical awareness (Narvaez and Bock, 2014). Ethical awareness can therefore be described as a cognitive and reflexive action that serves as an intermediary between instructional experiences and behavioural outcomes and therefore is an appropriate mediating variable in models that investigate how teaching methods affect higher-order outcomes such as social responsibility. Also, ethical awareness has a connection with meta-cognitive skills like reflection and self-evaluation. Reflective practice, including reflective journals, discussion forums, and action learning projects, has been found to enhance the ethical awareness of students due to the need to relate the material of academic programs with the values and real-life situations of the learner. It is in line with studies which point at the fact that content learning does not necessarily trigger moral reasoning but rather organized involvement in moral complexities (Narvaez and Bock 2014).

Higher Education Social Responsibility:

Social responsibility implies a disposition towards ethical behavior that promotes the welfare of society, fairness and interaction with others. It includes civic engagement, professional decision-making ethics, and social justice and sustainability contributions. The growing conceptualisation of social responsibility in higher education is a learning outcome that institutions ought to develop both through the curricular and co-curricular experiences (Brewer and Cunningham, 2023). Not only are universities supposed to teach but also produce graduates who can contribute towards the common good and solve problems within society. Empirical research associates ethical awareness, with consequent socially responsible attitudes and behaviours. As an example, more ethically aware students are expected to have an involvement in community service, professional ethics, and promote social justice (Zhang et al., 2025). They are not directly related to the interactive teaching techniques; however, the findings indicate that ethical awareness

contributes greatly in determining social responsibility. Research on social responsibility thus frequently focuses on education that brings together ethical reflection and civic action, so that students may use the classroom learning in community situations. Moreover, service learning, community-based project, and experiential learning activities have been linked to the rise in the social responsibility of students. These learning activities incorporate learning into the social problems where students are able to evaluate how their learning and practices affect the society outside their classrooms and learning institutions. Engaged scholarship research recommends that students should be given the opportunity to engage in community-based projects to gain skills but also sense of responsibility and belonging to social problems, which are larger in scale (Van de Ven, 2007). This confirms the argument that interdisciplinary approaches to teaching can be used to promote the social responsibilities orientation of students.

Mediating Role of Ethical Awareness:

The analysis of the literature synthesis demonstrates that the instructional methods define the ethical awareness, and the ethical awareness determines the social responsibility. Nevertheless, studies that directly investigate a mediating role of ethical awareness between teaching practices and social responsibility are scarce. The available literature focuses on the immediate effects, but fails to unravel the thinking processes by which method of teaching produces socially responsible results. This becomes one of the theoretical and empirical gaps to be filled by the present study through structural equation modelling. The mediating effect of ethical awareness is in line with cognitive theories of moral development, which argue that one has to first appreciate ethical aspects of situations and assimilate them into their value system before converting them to socially responsible behaviour. Ethical awareness is therefore an intermediate mental process, and it redirects the pedagogical influences into the overall social actions. Empirically modelling this mediation, the current study adds to the further development of theoretical insights into how the experiences in education form moral and social results.

Finally, the literature states that the introduction of new pedagogical practices, especially the ones that include active, reflective, and collaborative components are linked to the enhancement of the students moral reasoning and ethical awareness. These intellectual and thinking benefits offer a platform toward socially responsible attitudes and behaviours, which implies that a mediational relationship exists between pedagogical practice and the results of social responsibility. Nonetheless, there are still loopholes on how such relationships work in empirical models that are used to test the mediating processes like the ethical awareness. The current paper addresses these gaps by theorising

and investigating a model in which the teaching methods and social responsibility have an intermediary role played by ethical awareness among students of a university. With the help of various research on pedagogical and moral development, the present study adds to the literature explaining not only immediate impacts but also cognitive processes through which an educational practice has indirect impacts on socially significant results. This pragmatic interest is not only insightful towards the academic theory but also towards the curriculum and institutional policy that would contribute to creating awareness on Islamic ethics and socially responsible graduates.

H1: Teaching Methods (TM) positively influence Ethical Awareness (EA) among university students.

H2: Ethical Awareness (EA) positively influences Social Responsibility (SR) among university students.

H3: Teaching Methods (TM) positively influence Social Responsibility (SR) among university students.

H4: Ethical Awareness (EA) mediates the relationship between Teaching Methods (TM) and Social Responsibility (SR).

3. Methodology

The research involved a survey study design, which was a quantitative and cross-sectional study to explore the interrelationships between teaching practices, ethics awareness and social responsibility in post-secondary education. The study is based on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), where the study aims to determine the effect of pedagogical practice on ethical cognition and responsibility behaviour among students, and a mediating variable is ethical awareness. The sample population was composed of undergraduate and postgraduate students in business and social science programs in Pakistani government and non-government universities. A sample size of 320 participants was chosen, which ensures representation on an academic level, gender, and program, which is much higher than the recommended minimum sample size required to conduct PLS-SEM analysis (Hair Jr et al., 2021 & Hair, J. F., 2014). The data was gathered by the help of a structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was tested by the experts and pilot-tested with 30 students and the result showed the questionnaire was reliably valid (Cronbachs alpha > 0.7). The analysis of data was done with PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4 which is applicable to mediation models, latent constructs as well as data that do not necessarily satisfy the assumption of multivariate normality (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The analysis was done in two steps. To assess the reliability of the measurement model, the

first criterion was Cronbachs alpha and composite reliability (0.7 and above), the second criterion was convergent validity (AVE 0.5 and above), and the third criterion was discriminant validity (HTMT). Second, the structural model measured the hypothesis relationships. Ethics were rigorously followed that included voluntary involvement, informed consent, confidentiality, and withdrawal. Before the collection of data, institutional Islamic ethics were approved. In general, this methodology offers a stringent outline of testing the mediating role of ethical awareness in the association between teaching practices and social responsibility that can be used to yield both theoretical and practical results in curriculum design in tertiary education.

4. Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis and findings in this chapter will be used to investigate the relationship between Teaching Methods (TM), Ethical Awareness (EA), and Social Responsibility (SR) among the Pakistani university students. It is analysed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) of SmartPLUS 4, according to the two-stage approach suggested by Hair Jr et al. (2021). First, the measurement model is tested to prove reliability and validity. Second, the structural model is evaluated to test the hypotheses (H1-H4) with the mediation analysis of ethical awareness. The number of students who took part in the study was 320. Out of these 55 percent were undergraduate and 45 percent were postgraduates. The gender ratio was 52:48 female: male respectively. Students represented business (60%), and social science (40) programs. The varied demographic composition guarantees that it is representative enough to be generalized and conducted a PLS-SEM analysis.

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement model was tested to ascertain the construct reliability, convergent and discriminant validity before testing the structural relationships. Reliability: Cronbach-alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used to determine the internal consistency reliability. Table 4.1 indicates that all constructs have values above the recommended standard of 0.70 which is satisfactory reliability.

Table 4.1: Measurement Model – Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Teaching Methods (TM)	0.82	0.88	0.64
Ethical Awareness (EA)	0.85	0.90	0.66
Social Responsibility (SR)	0.84	0.89	0.65

Discriminant Validity: Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Each construct's square root of AVE exceeded correlations with other constructs, and HTMT values were below 0.85, confirming that constructs are distinct.

Table 4.2:

Constructs	TM	EA	SR
Teaching Methods (TM)	0.80		
Ethical Awareness (EA)	0.57	0.81	
Social Responsibility (SR)	0.46	0.60	0.81

Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed to test hypothesised relationships. Path coefficients, t-values, and p-values were calculated using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples.
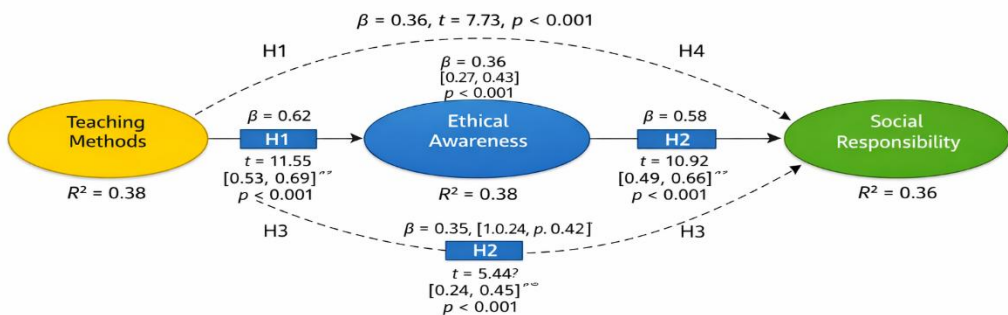
Table 4.3: Structural Model Results (Direct Effects and Mediation)

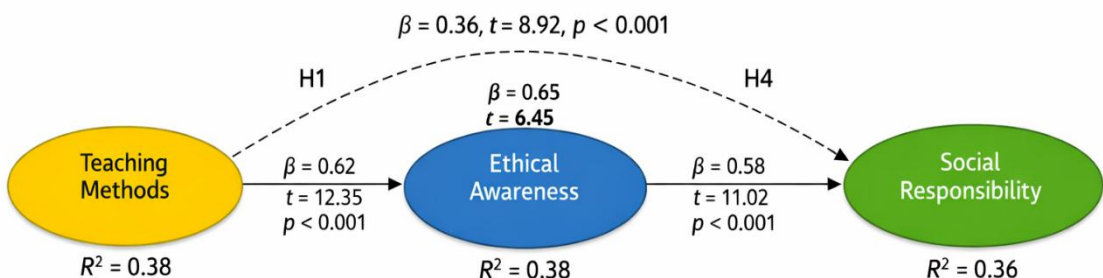| Hypothesis	Path	B(Path Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	TM → EA	0.62	12.35	<0.001	Supported
H2	EA → SR	0.58	11.02	<0.001	Supported
H3	TM → SR	0.35	6.45	<0.001	Supported
H4	TM → EA → SR (Indirect)	0.36	8.92	<0.001	Partial Mediation

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Figure 1. Structural Model (PLS-SEM Algorithm Results)

Figure 1 shows the estimated structural model that was regressed with the help of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The model shows the direct and indirect correlation between Teaching Methods, Ethical Awareness, and Social

Responsibility. The independent construct is Teaching Methods, Ethical Awareness is the mediating variable and Social Responsibility is the dependent construct. Path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels show that Teaching Methods were significantly important in creating a positive impact on Ethical Awareness, which in its turn significantly affects Social Responsibility. Moreover, there is also a positive direct influence of Teaching Methods on Social Responsibility. R2 values of Ethical Awareness and Social Responsibility indicate that the model is explanatory in nature, which is why the proposed mediation framework is sufficient.

Figure 2. Bootstrapping Results of the Structural Model (PLS-SEM)

The bootstrapping findings of the structural model estimated through the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) are shown in Figure 2. The figure indicates path coefficients (β) that are standardised, t-values and level of significance developed by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The findings suggest that Teaching Methods positively affect Ethical Awareness significantly and Social Responsibility is affected by Ethical Awareness significantly. Moreover, the direct relationship between Teaching Methods and Social Responsibility is not insignificant, which proves the strength of structural relationships. This indirect relationship between Teaching Methods and Social Responsibility through Ethical Awareness is also significant at the statistical level, which empirically indicates the mediating nature of Ethical Awareness. Because both direct and indirect effects are also of significance, the findings affirm the partial mediation. These results confirm the hypothesized model and prove the relevance and consistency of the estimated relationships, which makes ethical awareness a significant factor with the aid of which teaching practices may lead to the socially responsible behaviour in university students.

The structural model analysis has given a high support to all hypothesised relationships, which points at the importance of teaching methods and ethical awareness in making university students socially responsible. Hypothesis 1 (H1) was that teaching practice plays a major role in ethical awareness. These findings resonate with this connection, showing that interactive and reflective pedagogical methods, which include discussion-based learning, case studies, and reflective assignments, are beneficial in terms of developing the skills of recognising the ethical dilemma, applying moral principles, and thinking about values in students. This observation is similar to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which states that learning takes place by observing and modelling and internalising cognitions. Universities may successfully influence moral cognition and ethical sensitivity by involving the students in activities that involve critical thinking and ethical reflection, which are key areas of decision-making whether in the personal, academic or professional sphere. Hypothesis 2 (H2) tested how the social responsibility was related to the ethical awareness. The findings show that those students that have better ethical awareness have a tendency to demonstrate socially responsible behaviours, including civic engagement, ethical decision-making, and societal welfare consideration. It is important to note that ethical awareness is a cognitive base of social responsibility. Ethical awareness will enable students to recognize the issues in the society and evaluate ethical effects of their actions to create a feeling of responsibility and interest in the common good. These findings are consistent with the previous studies indicating that

ethical cognition is a precondition to pro-social behaviour in general and especially in higher education, in which students are supposed to acquire both academic and moral competencies (Narvaez and Bock, 2014; Zhang et al., 2025).

Hypothesis 3 (H3) was concerned with the direct impact of the teaching methods on social responsibility. The results show that the teaching approaches do not only play a role in ethical awareness, but have a direct effect on socially responsible behaviours of students. This implies that values like civic engagement and social responsibility can be directly fostered via pedagogical methods that promote active involvement, reflection and ethical dialogue regardless of cognitive ethical awareness. That is, the interactive and value-oriented learning experience exposes the students to a climate in which socially responsible norms are internalised and a behavioural orientation towards society-level beneficial contribution. This finding underscores the teaching methods duality in influencing the cognitive and behavioural outcomes in the students.

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 (H4) determined the intermediary role of ethical awareness between the teaching methods and social responsibility. The comparison establishes the role of partial mediation, which means that it is the instructional approaches that directly and indirectly shape social responsibility by ethical consciousness. The indirect route shows that ethical reality is a cognitive mediator, a way of transforming pedagogical interventions to socially responsible behaviour. It is ethically taught in students initially by being instilled by being guided, discussed and reflected, which is then translated into the practical in terms of social responsibility. The biased mediation suggests the current influence of teaching approaches on the social behaviour as well since it offers experiential and value-rich learning experiences. Collectively, these results underscore the interactive nature between pedagogy, moral cognition, and social action, which imply that higher education institutions ought to develop programs that incorporate ethical education in the instructional programs to ensure the greatest social responsiveness results are achieved. Overall, the findings suggest that the educational approaches are a powerful key to building a sense of ethical awareness and social responsibility in the learners. Ethical consciousness is also a powerful mediator, yet a direct pedagogical impact is not insignificant, which creates a necessity to provide educational activities that will be interactive and conscious in respect to Islamic ethics oriented. The results of the research have an implication on the curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers who want to produce socially responsible graduates to address ethical dilemmas and positively contribute to society (Narvaez and Bock, 2014; Rahmawati et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2025).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The study examined the relationship between teaching methods, ethical awareness and social responsibility among Pakistani university students, with the mediator of ethical awareness being analysed using PLS-SEM. The results prove that the interactive and value-based instructional approaches, such as discussion-based learning, case studies, and reflective pedagogy, can significantly contribute to the ethical awareness of students (H1). This also confirms the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which focuses on the idea that the students acquire moral cognitions by observation, modelling and practice under guidance. These approaches promote critical self-reflection and internalisation between the ethical concepts by involving the students in the learning process, which serves as an indicator of the significance of the pedagogy in the development of the moral reasoning in the students. The findings also reveal that there is a positive impact of ethical awareness on social responsibility (H2). More aware students of islamic ethics aware of islamic ethics are in a better position to appreciate the ethical consequences of their action, make principled judgments and serve the good of the society. This is in line with the previous studies that depict ethical cognition a precursor to socially responsible behaviour (Narvaez and Bock, 2014; Zhang et al., 2025). Ethical awareness will offer the students a cognitive base to assess social issues, take various viewpoints to mind and behave in a manner that does not contradict social and ethical standards. In addition, social responsibility (H3) is also directly influenced by teaching practices. The above observation implies that teaching methods could facilitate socially responsible behaviour by not only improving the cognitive ethical sense but also providing experiential and value-based learning experiences. Collaborative projects, service-learning and reflective practices are some of the activities involved, which prompt students to focus on ethical principles in practice, which enhances their interest in addressing issues in the society. These findings highlight the duality of teaching strategies in generating ethical thinking and ethical behaviour. The mediating value of ethical awareness (H4) was partially supported suggesting that the methods of teaching have the power to impact social responsibility indirectly through ethical awareness and directly. This underscores the critical nature of ethical awareness as the channel in transforming pedagogical interventions into social responsibility. Ethical norms are internalised by the students after guided learning, and the students reflect them in socially responsible behaviours. The partial mediation implies that in addition to the role of cognitive internalisation, the immediate experience impact of lessons taught is also a source of pro-social behaviour.

Such results highlight the significance of incorporating ethical and social responsibility learning into the teaching processes in order to achieve optimal results in students. On balance, the article confirms that colleges and universities are very instrumental in the development of responsible attitudes among students. The methods of teaching that encourage interaction and reflection, as well as ethical thinking, are needed to develop graduates who are not only academically competent, but also socially responsible and morally conscious. The implications of this research to curriculum design, teaching and learning methods as well as policy making are relevant especially in developing economies such as Pakistan where the universities are supposed to bring about the cognitive as well as the societal competencies among the learners.

Practical Implications

The findings of this research imply a number of practical suggestions: Curriculum Development: Universities can incorporate the ethical reasoning and social responsibility courses into the basic programs, especially business and social sciences. Instructional Approaches: To enhance ethical awareness, the faculty ought to use interactive and reflective pedagogies, which include discussion-based learning, case studies, and reflective activities. Institutional Policy: Colleges and universities ought to encourage values education by use of workshops, seminars and community participation programs to make students more socially responsible. Professional Training: Teachers may be prepared to identify and instill ethical and socially responsible behaviours among students through teaching development courses.

Theoretical Contributions

This research adds value to the literature in education and social science since it incorporates pedagogical approach with moral and cultural paradigms. It includes empirical data on the validation of Social Learning Theory in higher education and proves that not only the teaching practices can influence cognitive ethical awareness but also determine socially responsible behaviours. Underlining the mediating variant of ethical awareness, the study can provide the theoretical framework that can explain how pedagogical practice can create socially responsible graduates in the emerging economies.

Limitations and Future Research.

This study has flaws even though it has been useful. To begin with, cross-sectional design restricts the causal inferences. Longitudinal studies would be more effective in measuring the change in ethnic awareness and social responsibility with time. Second, the researchers concentrated on business and social science students in Pakistan, and this

limitation may not be applicable to other fields and countries. In the future, the sample size may be increased to various academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Lastly, the research was based on self-reported scales, which can be subject to social desirability bias, a combination of surveys and observational or behavioural tests would improve validity.

The current research confirms that pedagogical approaches play a major role in the ethical awareness and social responsibility of students, and that ethical awareness mediates this connection to a certain degree. The moral cognition that is developed during interactive, reflective, and value-oriented forms of pedagogical approaches stimulate responsible actions on the part of students to the society. These results highlight the importance of increased education in the development of responsible attitudes in students, especially in newly-developing economies. Universities can also graduate academically competent graduates knowledgeable in Islamic ethics and socially responsible by embracing consciousness of Islamic ethics in terms of teaching strategies to enhance awareness of Islam ethics, wherein individual ambitions are oriented towards societal and ethical interests.

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