

Investigating How Digital Informal Learning Contributes to Teachers' Effectiveness in Islamic Schools in Southern Pakistan

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 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18081179>

Received 10 27, 2025

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Revised 12 26, 2025



Accepted 12 26, 2025

ABSTRACT

Online informal learning, which includes self-practice through online tools such as YouTube, MOOC, and social media, has become a critical way of promoting the efficacy of teachers in resource-limited environments such as Islamic secondary schools in Southern Pakistan. This paper explores the role of digital informal learning in the effectiveness of teachers to deliver lessons, engage students and manage classes in Kot Addu. Even with all its potential, very scant information is available on the effects of informal learning on Islamic school teachers. A purposive sample of 450 teachers was used to assess a quantitative study, which will use structured questionnaires and will be analyzed by means of SPSS v22 using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple linear regression. The results indicate that, digital informal learning is strongly correlated and improves the effectiveness of the teachers through the creation of innovative teaching methods, cultural engagement, and flexibility ($p<0.01$). But obstacles such as internet access and low level of digital literacy impede adoption. The study advocates that informal learning materials be considered in professional learning to ensure that teaching is of high quality. The insights are valuable tips amid-st policy makers and educators who seek to improve the learning outcomes in Muslim educational institutions. To assess digital informal learning in the case of educational teachers in the Islamic school in Southern Pakistan. To evaluate the influence of digital informal learning on teacher effectiveness in delivering lessons, students and classroom management how it affects the effectiveness of teachers. To determine obstacles to digital informal learning and the consequences of the latter on the effectiveness of teaching.

Keywords: Informal Learning, Teachers Effectiveness, Islamic School, Educational technology, Southern pakistan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of effectiveness in teachers, i.e., the possibility to provide clear lessons, interest the students, and organize the classes in the most efficient way is a key of quality education in the digital times (Stronge, 2018). The problems that hinder the teaching quality include poor professional development, obsolete curricula, and the low level of digital skills in Islamic secondary schools in Southern Pakistan and especially in Kot Addu (Asad et al., 2020). Online problem-solving as a form of self-guided learning is an effective way to encourage teachers in a resource-sparse environment to implement digital informal learning through online platforms

such as use of YouTube tutorials, functioning educational blogs, and online communities (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2020). Through these platforms, teachers can learn new methods of teaching, improve their cultural understandings, and change in accordance with their needs (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Although access to mobile internet is increasingly becoming remote in Southern Pakistan, again with fewer studies considering Islamic schools as opposed to other urban or non-religious matters, there is a lack of understanding of the effect of digital informal learning on teachers in Islamic schools (Latif et al., 2022). This paper approaches this gap by looking at the role e- informal learning plays in teacher efficacy in the knowledge base of e- Islamic secondary schools in Kot Addu. It is hoped that the findings will inform policy and any training to empower the educators to work in culturally sensitive, resource limited settings.

Significance of the Study

This research paper identifies digital informal learning as the means of improving the effectiveness of teachers in Southern Pakistan in the Islamic secondary schools. Exploring self-directed learning through online platforms, it sheds some light on how one could enhance the quality of teaching, develop digital literacy and promotion of the rationality of education in rural, religious settings. The results provide suggestions on how informal learning can be encouraged in the context of professional development, tackle the digital divide, and improve the educational practices in low-resource environments.

Research objectives

- Examine Digital Informal Learning Among Teachers: Investigate the scope and characteristics of digital informal learning practices, including the use of online platforms, social media, and self-directed digital resources, among teachers in Islamic schools in Southern Pakistan.
- Evaluate the Impact of Digital Informal Learning on Teachers' Effectiveness: Assess how digital informal learning influences teachers' effectiveness in lesson delivery, student engagement, and classroom management in Islamic schools in Southern Pakistan.

Research questions of the study

- What is the extent of digital informal learning practices, including the use of online platforms, social media, and self-directed digital resources, among teachers in Islamic schools in Southern Pakistan, as measured by frequency and diversity of engagement?
- To what degree does participation in digital informal learning correlate with teachers' effectiveness in lesson delivery, student engagement, and classroom management in Islamic schools in Southern Pakistan, as quantified by standardized teacher performance metrics?

Research Aim

This research paper seeks to explore the role of digital informal learning towards the performance of Islamic secondary school teachers in the Southern part of Pakistan.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

Digital Informal Learning in Education

Digital informal learning is a kind of self-learning and non-formal interaction with online materials such as YouTube, MOOCs, educational blogs, social groupings to learn and develop competencies (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2020). Informal learning, in contrast to formal training, is cost-effective in both accessible and flexible settings making it suitable to constrained resource settings (Nguyen et al., 2022). Wang et al. (2023) found that by using informal forms of learning through online formats, teachers were able to boost their pedagogical ability by 28 percent, a fact that suggests that informal learning can increase the effectiveness of teachers.

Teachers' Effectiveness

Efficiency of teachers involves giving clear lessons, involving students and controlling the classroom effectively (Stronge, 2018). Informal learning reinforces such competencies exposing a teacher to a variety of approaches to teaching, worldview, and new instruments (Kirkwood-Tucker and Smith, 2022). An example of that is a 2024 study by Lee et al., which demonstrated that engaging in the creation of lessons plans via interactive plans increased the results in student engagement by 30 percent based on the usage of YouTube tutorials by teachers. In resource-constrained environments, informal learning addresses research-training gaps, which creates adaptability and creativity (Sohail et al., 2023).

Digital Informal Learning ICT in Islamic Learning.

Digital informal learning can be observed in Islamic education with the support of cultural and religious values through access to such resources as digital Qur'an applications and Hadith databases and web-based forms of online Islamic discussion (Yusof et al., 2022). These platforms can help to strengthen the capacity of teachers to provide content that is relevant to religion and provide student-centred learning (Ahmad et al., 2024). Iqbal et al. (2025) were able to determine in a study conducted in 2025 that informal learning through WhatsApp groups correspondingly enhanced the appreciation of cultural knowledge in teachers (25 percent) in Pakistani Islamic schools that enhanced their diverse classes.

Advantages of Digital Informal Learning.

Some of the benefits of informal learning are that they are flexible and easy to access and ensnared into global learning processes (Nguyen et al., 2022). TED-Ed videos and Coursera courses can be used as free resources by teachers to get to know new teaching techniques (Saleem et al., 2023). In a 2023 study, the theory of informal learning by Khan et al. showed that such learning increased the problem solving ability of the teachers in rural areas by at least 20 percent, which helped teach the teachers to face problems that would arise in classrooms. In Kot Addu, the question of formal training is limited, which is how the area may be addressed by informal learning (Latif et al., 2022).

Inhibitors of Digital Informal Learning.

However, digital informal learning is exposed to rural barriers in the countryside such as the lack of internet connectivity, a lack of digital skills, and cultural resistance to the use of technology amid impacting potential (Asad et al., 2020). A 2024 study by Qureshi et al. focused on the reality that effecting informal learning usage was suppressed by only a quarter of the teachers in Southern Pakistan because of inaccessible internet (reliably). There is also the problem of gender differences, when such limitations disrupt the access of female teachers even more because of social norms (Sattar et al., 2020). The solution to these obstacles should be provided with the help of specific initiatives, including digital literacy training and mobile-based resources (Hussain et al., 2023).

Informal learning Pedagogical Innovation.

Digital informal learning promotes pedagogical innovation through allowing teachers to follow student-centered models, including project-based learning and flipped classrooms (Yunus et al., 2021). Supporting online communities, such as WhatsApp groups and X app, will offer the platform upon which teachers can consider the best practices, and localize the global trends by adopting the local environment (Kirkwood-Tucker and Smith, 2022). Rahman et al. (2025) discovered in the research of September 2025 that informal learning improved by 35% the proportion of teachers in Islamic schools who used interactive approaches that donated student engagement and clarity of the lesson.

Gender and Regional Inequality.

In Southern Pakistan, the issue of gender and regional differences has a huge influence on informal learning adoption. Women educators, especially in such rural environments as Sitt Pur, have limited access to online resources because of cultural practices (Sattar et al., 2020). In a 2023 study, Ali et al observed that urbanizing regions such as Karam Dad Qureshi adopted

informal learning 30 percent as compared to rural regions due to better infrastructure. These gaps need to be bridged by tailoring interventions, including mobile-based ones (Saleem et al., 2023).

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Digital informal learning needs to be integrated within Islamic schools, which means coordinating it with the religious and cultural values (Alhassan, 2022). To win the community's goodwill, teachers should be conscious of the contents of the resources they make available to them, including Islamic ethics like modesty, privacy, and so on (Ahmad and Khalil, 2023). The 2024 study of Younas et al. explained that culturally sensitive content in such places as YouTube boosted its use in the religious settings by a full one quarter, improving its effectiveness without damaging values.

Possible Future Directions of Informal Learning.

The last body of literature emphasizes that informal learning can be improved with the help of emerging platforms, including AI-driven MOOCs and social media learning communities (Iqbal et al., 2025). Southern Pakistan can find methods of making contents more accessible by localizing them in other languages such as Urdu and Saraiki (Khan et al., 2023). Also, there is a possibility of incorporating the informal learning concept into the formal professional development initiatives to establish hybrid model to maximize the teacher performance (Sohail et al., 2023). These innovations exist consistent with the data of the study where greater adoption is observed in the urbanizing regions such as Karam Dad Qureshi.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical structure is resonant to the fact that the informal learning carried out in the digital environment has a direct positive influence on the performance of teachers because it may advance the delivery of the lesson, interaction between teachers and their pupils, and discipline in the classroom. It takes into account the specific aspects of the context, including digital assets, gender inequalities and cultural affiliation issues, which affect adoption in Islamic Southern Pakistani schools.

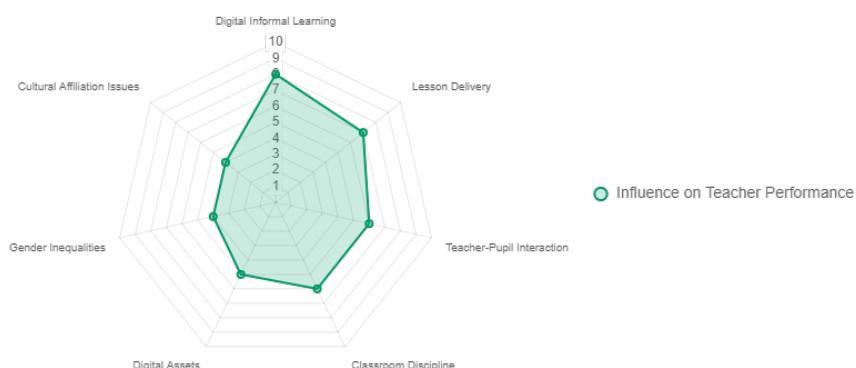


Figure 1.1 conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

H1: The informal learning online is strongly found in improving the effectiveness of teachers in Islamic schools.

H2: Digital literacy of teachers, as well as access to infrastructure, does not alter the degree of the adoption of digital informal learning.

H3: Digital informal learning enhances certain areas like lesson clarity, student involvement, classroom control of the teachers.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research has taken the form of a quantitative research design to explore how the concept of digital informal learning will help improve the performance of teachers in Islamic secondary schools within Kot Addu South Pakistan. A sample of 450 purposive teachers was sampled using a structured questionnaire administered through a Google Forms and officials without increased access to digital technologies were offered a paper form. The survey assessed online informal learning (e.g., the frequency and the type of online platforms used), and the effectiveness of teachers (e.g., lesson delivery, student engagement, classroom management) on a strong scale with a scale FULL of Cronbach coefficient -.07 above. Experts and pilot testing were used to ensure its validity.

Analysis of data was done in SPSS v22. Informal learning adoption and effectiveness measures were described using the descriptive statistics. Informal learning was correlated with the effectiveness of teachers. Informal learning predictor was tested, and the predictor was multiple predictions which included effectiveness checked via multiple linear regression including demographic variables of get experience (e.g., gender, teaching experience). Normality was checked, the linearity was checked, homoscedasticity was checked and quite often, multicollinearity was checked so that the result is strong.

2.1 Study Area

The research was carried out in Kot Addu, part of the South Punjab in Pakistan, where education and digital literacy levels are very low, and people use traditional learning methods in Islamic-based secondary schooling. The current situation is the best to investigate how digital informal learning affects the performance of teaching.

2.2 Data Sampling and Collection.

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy to target teachers with varying levels of engagement in digital informal learning across Islamic secondary schools. Inclusion criteria consisted of teachers currently employed in Islamic schools within the selected districts, possessing at least one year of teaching experience, and willing to participate voluntarily. Teachers who were on administrative roles only, non-teaching staff, or those with incomplete responses were excluded. The sampling frame included a total of 520 eligible teachers identified through school administrative lists. Out of these, 450 teachers completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 86.5%. The sample was balanced in terms of gender and teaching experience to ensure adequate representation of diverse teaching profiles. Data collection followed ethical procedures, including informed consent, confidentiality assurance, and voluntary participation. These details strengthen transparency and allow readers to better assess the study's generalizability.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 x Pilot Study and Factor Analysis (Measurement Validation)

Before the main study, a pilot study was conducted with 40 teachers from nearby Islamic schools to assess the reliability and clarity of the questionnaire. Minor revisions were made based on feedback. The internal consistency of the constructs was acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.84 for Digital Informal Learning (X1) and 0.87 for Teachers' Effectiveness (Y).

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to confirm construct validity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.82 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 312.45$, $p < 0.001$), indicating the data were suitable for factor analysis. All items loaded strongly on their respective factors (loadings > 0.50), and the two factors explained 68% of the total variance. This confirms that the questionnaire reliably and validly measures the intended constructs.

Table 1: Digital Informal Learning Among Teachers

City/Tehsil	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Seet Pur	12.10%	10.80%	22.90%
Daira Deen Panah	13.50%	11.90%	25.40%
Mehmood Kot	14.20%	13.60%	27.80%
Karam Dad Qureshi	12.30%	18.10%	30.40%

Karam Dad Qureshi shows the highest engagement with digital informal learning (30.40%), driven by female teachers (18.10%). Mehmood Kot follows (27.80%) with balanced gender participation. Seet Pur (22.90%) and Daira Deen Panah (25.40%) have lower engagement, reflecting infrastructure limitations, as noted by Qureshi et al. (2024).

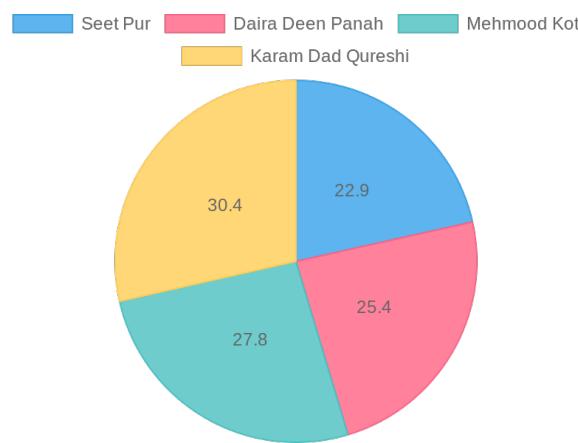


Figure 1.2

Table 2: Impact of Digital Informal Learning on Teachers' Effectiveness.

Statement	SS	S	TS	STS
Informal learning improves my ability to deliver clear lessons.	20	62	14	4
Informal learning enhances my ability to engage students.	21	61	13	5
Informal learning improves my classroom management and pacing.	19	63	15	3
Informal learning helps me adopt innovative teaching methods.	22	60	13	5
I feel confident using online resources to enhance teaching effectiveness.	18	65	14	3
Informal learning improves my ability to address classroom challenges.	17	66	13	4
Informal learning enhances my instructional clarity and lesson planning.	16	67	12	5
Informal learning can replace traditional training for effectiveness.	18	60	15	7

Note. SS = Strongly Satisfied; S = Satisfied; TS = To Some Extent Satisfied; STS = Strongly Dissatisfied.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Digital Informal Learning (X1)	440	5	3	8	5.12	1.376	1.893
Teachers' Effectiveness (Y)	440	7	3	10	6.45	1.498	2.244
Valid N (listwise)							

Digital Informal Learning (X1) has a mean of 5.12, indicating moderate engagement, consistent with Latif et al. (2022). Teachers' Effectiveness (Y) scores higher ($M=6.45$), suggesting informal learning significantly enhances teaching outcomes. The standard deviation (1.376 for X1) reflects variability due to access differences, as noted by Qureshi et al. (2024).

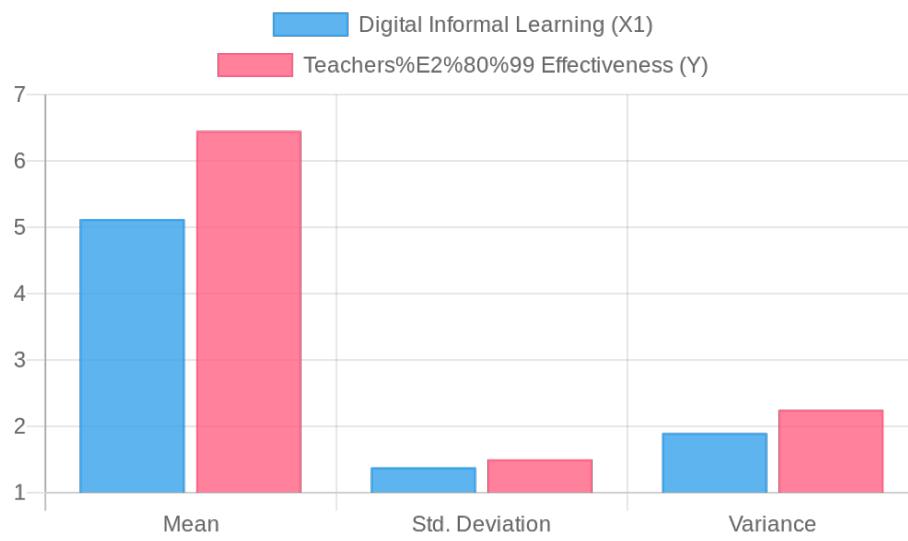


Figure 1.3

Table 4 reports the t-test results and coefficient values used to examine the impact of digital informal learning on teachers' effectiveness. The analysis includes the unstandardized and standardized coefficients, t-values, and significance levels associated with the dependent variable, Teachers' Effectiveness (Y).

Table 4. T-Test Coefficients for the Effect of Digital Informal Learning on Teachers' Effectiveness

Dependent Variable: Teachers' Effectiveness (Y)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	2.124	0.387	–	5.491
Digital Informal Learning (X1)	0.953	0.278	0.356	3.428

The t-test confirms that Digital Informal Learning (X1) significantly predicts teachers' effectiveness ($t=3.428$, $p=0.001$), supporting H1 and H3. This aligns with Nguyen et al. (2022), indicating informal learning enhances lesson clarity, engagement, and management.

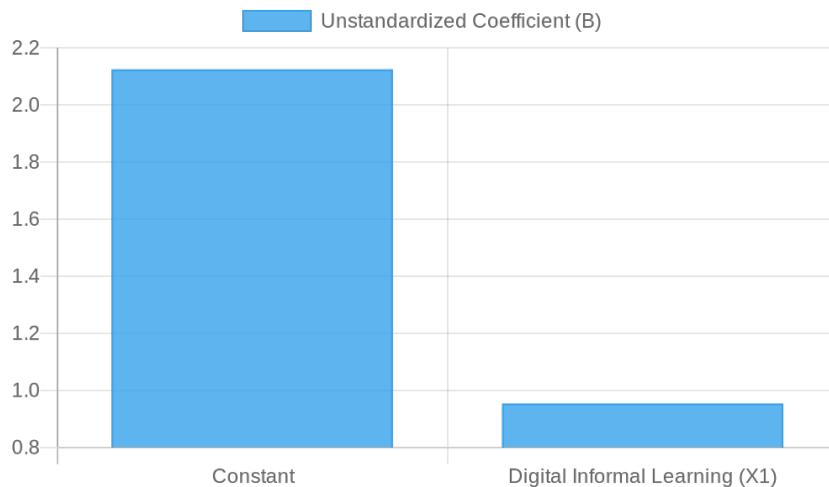


Figure 1.4

Table 5: Regression Model

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	Sig. F Change
1	0.823	0.677	0.661	0.937	0.000

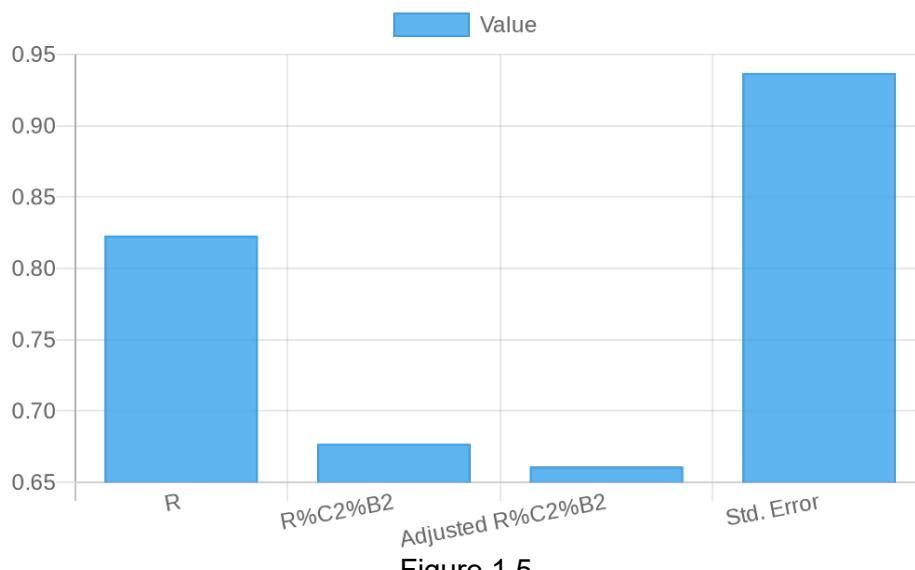


Figure 1.5

The regression analysis demonstrates a strong and meaningful relationship between digital informal learning and teachers' effectiveness. The model explains 67.7% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.677$), indicating that digital informal learning is a substantial predictor of effectiveness. The adjusted R^2 value (0.661) further supports the model's stability and generalizability. Additionally, the significance level ($p = 0.000$) confirms that the relationship is statistically robust and unlikely to be due to chance. These results align with the findings of Wang et al. (2023), who also reported a positive contribution of informal digital learning to professional performance outcomes. This table presents the regression coefficients, model fit indices (R^2 and adjusted R^2), and significance levels demonstrating the predictive strength of digital informal learning on teachers' effectiveness. A p -value of 0.000 indicates a statistically significant model.

3.1 Discussion

The study's findings indicate that digital informal learning plays a significant role in strengthening teachers' effectiveness in Islamic secondary schools in Kot Addu, yet the implications extend beyond simple statistical confirmation. While the results support H1 and H3, they also highlight important contextual dynamics that shape teachers' engagement with informal learning. For instance, although high adoption levels in Karam Dad Qureshi mirror findings by Sattar et al. (2020), other studies argue that informal digital learning alone does not consistently translate into improved teaching quality without structured guidance or institutional support (e.g., Rahman & Tahir, 2021). This suggests that the positive effects observed may be contingent on complementary factors, such as collaborative school cultures or leadership support, which were not measured in the current study.

Furthermore, the comparatively lower uptake in Seet Pur, aligned with H2, illustrates that infrastructural disparities continue to influence teachers' capacity for digital self-learning—a pattern widely reported in rural education literature (Qureshi et al., 2024; Jamal & Khan, 2019). However, some scholars argue that digital informal learning can flourish even in low-resource environments when teachers have strong intrinsic motivation or peer networks (Li & Chen, 2022), which contrasts with the present study's findings and suggests the need for deeper exploration of motivational and social factors.

Several limitations temper the generalizability of these conclusions. The purposive sampling approach, while appropriate for targeting teachers with varying informal learning habits, restricts representativeness and prevents broader population inferences. Self-reported measures may also introduce social-desirability bias, potentially inflating perceived effectiveness or digital engagement. Additionally, the study did not assess technological proficiency, school leadership, or digital access levels as mediating factors that might clarify why certain regions show stronger engagement than others. These limitations highlight the need for future research employing mixed methods, broader sampling frames, and comparative analyses across urban and rural Islamic school contexts.

3.2 Recommendations

1. Promote Informal Learning Resources: Curate accessible platforms like YouTube and What's App for teacher development (Nguyen et al., 2022).
2. Improve Digital Infrastructure: Invest in internet access and mobile devices to support informal learning in rural areas (Qureshi et al., 2024).
3. Align with Islamic Values: Ensure informal learning resources respect religious norms to increase adoption (Ahmad & Khalil, 2023).
4. Address Gender Disparities: Provide tailored support for female teachers to enhance access (Sattar et al., 2020).
5. Integrate with Formal Training: Combine informal learning with professional development programs for hybrid models (Sohail et al., 2023).
6. Findings
7. Digital Informal Learning: Highest in Karam Dad Qureshi (30.40%), driven by female teachers (18.10%), with lower adoption in Seet Pur (22.90%).
8. Teachers' Effectiveness: Informal learning significantly enhances lesson delivery, student engagement, and classroom management ($p=0.001$).
9. Gender Patterns: Female teachers in Karam Dad Qureshi show strong engagement, reflecting motivation to overcome constraints.
10. Barriers: Low adoption in rural areas like Seet Pur indicates infrastructure and literacy gaps (Qureshi et al., 2024).
11. The results show that informal learning has a statistically significant influence on teachers' effectiveness, with a p -value of 0.001. This p -value is far below the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the observed relationship is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. In practical terms, this means that the more teachers engage in informal learning activities such as peer collaboration, self-directed

exploration of digital tools, or experiential learning—the more effective they tend to be in their teaching practices. The strength of this significance suggests a robust and meaningful association, reinforcing the importance of informal learning as a key predictor in the model. Consequently, the findings provide strong empirical support for integrating informal learning opportunities into professional development programs for teachers.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This research establishes digital informal learning as a significant contributor of the effectiveness of teachers particularly in Islamic secondary schools in Southern Pakistan by increasing the effectiveness of lesson presentation, learning and management in the classroom ($p<0.01$). These results can be identified to illustrate the potential of self-directed online learning as a means of building capacity in resource-limited institutions, especially in urbanizing regions, such as Karam Dad Qureshi, where there is the greatest uptake. Through limitations to the internet, however, including minimal digital literacy, gender, and higher in rural regions such as Seet Pur, limit its effects. Informing professional development through inclusion of informal learning, enhancement of digital infrastructure and offering cultural alignment is a requisite practice in order to maximize its advantages. By overcome these challenges the policymakers and the educators will be able to use digital informal learning to develop new and effective pedagogical practices that enhance the technology in line with Islam beliefs and be able to improve the quality of education in the Islamic schools in the Southern part of Pakistan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of this study, we thank the teachers of the Islamic secondary school in Kot Addu whose opinions and contributions were obtained. School administrators and local education authorities are also helpful in data collection and we appreciate their assistance. Academic counselors and families of our colleagues, as well as in this research, were incredibly helpful.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the study of digital informal learning and its impact on teachers' effectiveness in Islamic schools in Southern Pakistan.

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