Unveiling Extremism in Higher Education Institutions and Its Prevention Through Peace Education: A Case of Two Universities in Islamabad, Pakistan

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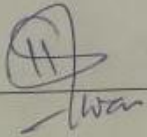# National University of Sciences & Technology

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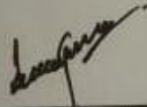2. Name: Dr. Humaira Shafi   Signature: _____

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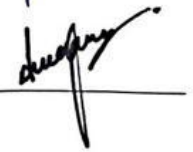
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents, my siblings and my lovely friends, without their constant support I wouldn't be able to complete this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1.	QAU	Quaid-e-Azam University
2.	IIUI	International Islamic University Islamabad
3.	UN	United Nations

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to critically investigate the tendencies of extremism among students in the universities of Pakistan, and its relationship with its key drivers and counter-measures based on elements of peace education program. This mixed method research makes use of both qualitative data and quantitative data. Where qualitative data is gathered by semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion while quantitative data is gathered by administrating surveys in two universities. The case studies undertaken for this research are Quaid-e-Azam University and International Islamic University, Islamabad from where 340 surveys were collected to determine the tendencies of extremism among students, along with its primary causes and counter-measures. Through the primary gained by conducting interviews and focused group discussions, it was revealed that that in recent times students are more prone to extremist ideas, have a growing sense of exclusivity, and tend to negate differences that are present among groups. Further reinforcing these results, the quantitative data showed that the tendencies of extremism among university students do exist and have increased in recent times. Also, a positive relationship between extremism and its numerous key drivers especially identity dynamics and lack of critical thinking abilities among students is identified. Moreover, it is revealed that peace education programs can be a significant tool to mitigate extremism in universities by instilling critical thinking among students, conflict resolution skills, and accepting and giving voice to marginalized groups in society. Finally, this research sheds light on the need for compulsory peace education programs in universities that are focused on inculcating different capabilities among students along with capacity building of teachers to mitigate extremism.

Key Words: Youth Extremism, Extremism in Universities, Violent Clashes, Peace Education, Social Identity Theory

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but
they are intolerant- Robert. F Kennedy

1.1   Overview of Youth Extremism Around the World

Since 9/11, states around the world have grappled with the issue of extremism and terrorism.
A plethora of literature was generated around the themes of extremism and terrorism not only
to expand on their understanding but also to formulate robust measures to counter and prevent
them. The immediate response to the rising terrorism and violent extremism around the world
was using kinetic means. This could also be reflected in the measures that were taken
immediately after 9/11 such as the start of the global war on terror. However, with time there
was a realization that the problem of violent extremism needs comprehensive measures as even
after bringing down the number of violent extremist attacks, there were still tendencies of
extremist ideas among people that promoted militancy and violent extremism.

Along with it, there was a cognizance that extremism is affecting people from all walks of life,
and young people in schools and universities are no exception to it. This discourse revolving
around extremism in universities was augmented by the fact that most of the terrorists involved
in the world's worst terrorist attacks had advanced educational backgrounds (Gambetta and
Hertog 2017). Likewise, a study demonstrated that educational institutions served as a good
opportunity for extremist organizations to recruit educated people, especially in developing
countries, consequently making the education sector one of the prominent partners in
preventing and combating extremism and violent extremism (Sas et al 2020). Another study
revealed that especially in countries with a history of conflict and multiple ethno-religious
groups present, extremism was seen to be a growing issue among the youth in educational
institutions (Mihailovic and Hadzibegovic 2023). Similarly, it was revealed that a high number
of hate crimes were reported on university campuses not only in Europe but in the US too
(Bauer-Wolf 2019). Therefore, youth-promoting and adopting extremist viewpoints has

become a global phenomenon (Karim and Riaz 2021,9- 20). Another study revealed that Malaysia and Indonesia are seen as favorable places to recruit young students from universities with expertise, especially in science and technological background by ISIS (Johnson 2019). In 2018, three university students were arrested from the University of Riau following their involvement in two suicide bomb attacks in Surabaya and East Java, Indonesia. In addition, two students of Al-Madinah University were arrested on charges of channeling funds to ISIS. Not only this but two university students from Monash University, Malaysia were found to be directly involved in the Dhaka Bombings in 2016 (Aslam 2017). A significant number of students from Kenyan universities were also found to be actively recruited and even traveling to Somalia, Libya, and Syria to join terrorist organizations (Johnson 2019).

The result of these findings led to a new approach where the states knew that they had to involve both the education policymakers and counter-violent extremism experts to formulate policies targeting youth extremism in universities. This could be highlighted by the EU Prevent Strategy which included the postulate of working with the education sector to make sure there is disruption of extremist material and prevention of vulnerable people from joining these extremist movements. Even a number of policies were adopted by HEIs in order to comply with the Prevent Strategy such as the University of Sunderland, and the University of Wolverhampton (Streitwiesera et al 2019).

1.2   Problem Statement

According to the UN in 2023, the population of Pakistan surpassed 240 million with the youth between the age of 24 and under it making up two-thirds of this population (Aman 2024). In a country that is placed 4th on the global terrorism index, this huge youth bulge could prove to be a double-edged sword. Where on the one hand, the youth can be turned into a huge human capital or on the other hand can pose a threat as a demographic disaster. Hence, it is vital that along with the kinetic measures, the state also takes comprehensive measures so that the focus is not only on pure military means but also on reducing extremist tendencies of the population (Basit 2015). Otherwise, the country would be stuck in an infinite loop of taking futile countering extremism and terrorism measures. As in Pakistan, the state might have decreased the number of incidents, but the level of extremism remains high with few novel characteristics and continues to affect people from different walks of life (Iqbal 2021). All these factors combined point towards the need to look into the frequent violent clashes and active

recruitment of students from universities that reflect that tendencies of extremism might be present and growing among the youth of Pakistan. Hence, this research aims to explore the tendencies of extremism among youth in universities of Pakistan along with its key drivers and countermeasures in light of peace education.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Extremism

A unanimous definition of what extremism is, what terrorism really stands for, and what are the driving factors behind them is still lacking. The definitions of terminologies of terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism are so diverse that they are often used interchangeably even though they all are very different terms. Academia needs to distinguish between these two terms or the violent extremism measures would become focused on just preventing the acts of terror from happening instead of functionalizing grassroots-level measures to combat the extremist ideologies that end up leading to such acts (Streicher 2015). Tutu (2006) defined extremism as, *"when an individual does not allow for different points of view; when they impose their own viewpoints on others and think of their views as being quite exclusive from others"*. Moreover, extremism can sometimes lead to violence which basically takes place in the absence of reasoning or rather it is a belief that the acts of violence produce more benefits than even outweigh the cost of a human life. It is a sense of extreme insecurity, that arise from a lack of political, social, and economic opportunities for advancement and growth (Mroz 2009).

On the emergence and definition of violent extremism, Eddine and Garnham (2011) mention that the emergence of violent extremism can be traced back to the summer of 2005 when US officials coined the term SAVE (Struggle Against Violent Extremism) to replace the acronym GWOT (Global War on Terror). Reflecting on it, the Australian government one year later for the first time defined violent extremism as, *"the willingness to use or support the use of violence to advance specific beliefs ranging from political to social to ideological nature"* (Minerva Nasser-Eddine 2011) . Hence, extremism is a rising complex phenomenon lacking a unanimous definition making it more difficult to be countered and prevented. However, by looking at its driving factors in a given context, one can surely make robust countermeasures. Some of the driving factors of extremism are given below.

1.3.2 Driving Factors Behind Extremism

To counter-extremism, it is also vital to be cognizant of the driving factors behind it. Scholars elucidate that due to the lack of one unified definition, the driving factors behind the phenomenon of extremism are also diverse. Therefore, what leads to the formation of an extremist movement and why people join them can have a multifactorial answer. Allan, Glazzard, and Sasha (2015) while commenting on it elucidated in their report that there are three levels in which the driving factors of extremism can be divided into. Firstly, at the macro level (country or community-wide) the situational factors are at play, second level is meso-level which affects societal and communal levels where the social/cultural factors are operating and lastly at the microlevel, the individual factors affect the individual of the society. Further elaborating it, they defined the situational factors as the political and economic grievances, when one group is marginalized at the state level. Moving on to the social and cultural factors, they included religious and ethnic identities which operationalized at the societal level and might lead people to join extremist organizations. Finally, at the micro-level factors like ideological training and cognitive vulnerability were the reasons that led to the first adoption of extremist narratives which might later on metamorphose into violent extremism. Further digging deep into the drivers of extremism, scholars reviewed the 17 hypotheses given by the Department for International Development (DFID) and discussed their validity. The main focus of scholars out of the 17-hypothesis remained on identity dynamics as they argued that having an identity and a sense of belonging is a vital human psychological need however how this identity formation becomes maladaptive and leads people to join extremist movements is the center of debate among many psychologists (Allan et al 2015). Similarly, many people join terrorist and extremist groups to fulfill their need to belong and know what is their goal in life (Crenshaw 1983). This need is then exploited by the extremist and terrorist groups. As within the radical and extremist groups, the prospective terrorist finds a purpose in their life in addition to a sense of belonging and affiliation (Borum 2014). Hence, this universal normal phenomenon of identity formation often leads people to the path of extremism and radicalization. Moreover, ethnic and religious identities are prominent factors leading to extremism as religious and ethnic identities (most often when in opposition to the state) are exploited by extremist movements (Juergensmeyer 2003). However, the scholar also points out that even though religion is blamed for extremism and terrorism, it is not the cause of it rather it is a medium that is instrumentalized by the leaders of the extremist movements to articulate their grievances.

Moving on to discussing some countermeasures that were opted by different states to counter and prevent extremism.

1.3.3 Counter Measures for Preventing Extremism

As discussed, post-2005 states started to divert their attention to taking grass-root level actions to curb extremism instead of focusing on kinetic measures to stop the spread of violent extremism. Thus, understanding the definition of extremism and countering violent extremism is mutually essential. By understanding how the terminology is conceptualized, we can understand the countering measures that are developed and implemented (Goldsmith 2008). Further expanding on the concept of preventing and countering violent extremism measures, scholars described them as measures to intervene before the violence occurs. One of the meanings of prevention in this context is efforts and measures in the education and communal sector to influence the factors that are conducive to the growth of extremism which can then change into violent extremism. Exploring this concept in depth, Stephen and Boutellier (2019) reviewed over 73 papers and found resilience to be the best measure for preventing and countering extremism. According to them, building resilient individuals and communities can be the best possible prevention strategy towards violent extremism which can be achieved through education and social factors intervention (Stephens, Sieckelinck, and Boutellier 2019).

An essential component of the literature written on countering violent extremism is the multifaceted approaches that are needed because it's not just about merely responding to the threat but preventing the threat (Mroz 2009). In this context of multifaceted approaches, the traditional methods of countering violent extremism utilizing purely military means, or legislature interventions are not enough to deal with the threat hence, measures revolving around them would be needed but wouldn't produce long-term sustainable strategies to counter violent extremism as the issue behind it is the extremist mindset of individuals   (Crelinsten 2009). The vital thing is to combat the root causes of the conflict which would require these measures to be embedded in the social, cultural, and political context at the place of conflict occurring (Richmond 2003). Hence, for countering extremism and violent extremism we require measures based on the whole community approach rather than just hardcore military and intelligence measures, and one of those measures could be education as aforementioned. As in recent times, the terminology of peace education is gaining attention to bring forth peace and harmony in societies stuck with the tragedy of growing extremism and violent extremism. The next part delves into understanding the phenomenon of peace education.

1.3.4   Peace Education

Various definitions of peace education have been brought to light with their own diverse and distinctive components. Commenting on this, Porath (2003) stated that the concept of peace education is so diverse that the scholars argue on the problems that need to be addressed and correspondingly to the solution of those problems. Not only this but this conceptual diversity proves the process of choosing the site where peace education needs to take place is debatable. Hence, according to the scholars, this conceptual unclarity makes the term peace education highly debatable among the scholars (Porath 2003). Similarly, Bar-Tal expands on this by mentioning that even though the objectives of peace education remain similar each state needs a different form of peace education as it depends on the culture, context, the prevalent issue in the society, and the ability of educators to handle that situation. Salomon (2002) commenting on the lack of a fixed definition of the term asks the most pertinent questions what are the core attributes of the term peace education? Is the peace education in a war-torn society similar to a peaceful society? Is it violence reduction in schools' inculcation of democratic values or building the self-esteem of all individuals? Hence, according to Salomon and Nevro unless and until conceptual clarity is reached, scholarly and practical progress can't be made in this field. To bring together all the diverse voices together, scholar Gur Zev states that there are three major current trends under the lens of which peace education could be understood and developed further. Firstly, through the positivist lens, which takes peace education as the teaching of conflict resolution. Secondly, through a more critical approach, which focuses on individual emancipation and giving voices to the marginalized, and lastly, through the post-colonialist lens which takes peace education as not being the byproduct of Western liberal values of universalistic human rights and contradicts any definition of peace education based on these principles. Instead, the post-colonial approach advocates the inculcation of locals' understanding and context to integrate the components of peace education into the mainstream education system (Gur-Ze'ev 2010). Likewise, Betty Reardon, one of the pioneers of peace education who advocated not only for the need to study about peace but also study for peace defines peace education as the knowledge including the requirements, the obstacles, and possibilities of establishing and maintaining peace, in addition to acquiring skills that are used to develop reflective and participatory capacities in order to apply this knowledge in real life conflicts and problems (Dale T. Snauwaert 2012, 45-52).

While looking into the definition of peace education, it's pertinent to mention Johan Galtung, the pioneer of developing peace education as an academic field of research. According to him, peace education is the one that is adapted to the ecological challenges and cultural colonialism and stands against the cultural and structural violence in the society (Galtung 1994). Harris (2002) mentions that peace education is any attempt to teach peace to the masses. He opines that it is an attempt to integrate the core ingredients such as cooperative learning, critical thinking, and moral sensitivity into society through the education system.

Many states have utilized the tool of peace education to counter extremism in their educational institutions. A few examples are given subsequently.

1.3.4   Case Studies of Peace Education Interventions for Preventing Extremism

There are a number of case studies around the world where peace education programs were initiated to counter the rising extremism and a number of assessments have been done on them. One of the case studies can be taken from Rwanda, where peace education was inculcated into the mainstream secondary-level curriculum. After the genocide of Tutsi which claimed many lives, as a part of peacebuilding measure, this step was undertaken to mitigate the hostile feelings between the two groups. Basabose and Habyarimana (2019) stated that even though the purpose of the peace education program was to bring sustainable peace and emancipate each person of the society to be pro-peace, the contradictory messages that were inculcated into the curriculum proved the efforts to be futile. The subjects of peace and harmony that were meant to be focused on were lacking. Hence, the scholar argues that the state of Rwanda faced great challenges in applying for the peace education program because of the poor content designed for the program. Therefore, it's vital that when the peace education program is formed, its content aligns with what the stakeholders want (Basabose and Habyarimana, 2019)

Bajaj (2016) while mentioning the case of peace education in Kenya elucidated that the Kenyan government along with the help of UNICEF and UNHCR launched different peace education programs at school and higher education levels. The programs tried to reduce the hostility and promote harmony among the students by teaching values of human rights, equality, and tolerance. While mentioning the four key lessons taken from this case study, Bajaj mentioned that one of the main problems was the lack of peace education programs offered at the university level. It was due to the shortage of peace education material, and lack of teachers with prior training which made university students reluctant to join these programs even if

offered. As a significant amount of university students weren't part of these peace education programs offered at universities, they didn't prove to be of much importance.

In Sri Lanka, under the name of the social cohesion program, various efforts were taken to promote peace among different ethnicities and reduce hostility that existed for a very long time between Tamils and Sinhalese. Commenting on it, Aturupane (2011) mentions that the programs focused on formulating new curricula, equipping teachers with training, and revising the textbooks to remove any sort of discriminatory or hate material from them. Other than that, a separate unit named Social Cohesion and Peace Education was formulated under the Ministry of Education. One of the successful initiatives taken by the unit is *Denuwara Mithoro (Pals of two cities)*. Since its start in 2007, a total of 7 exchange programs have occurred where students from majority Tamil speaking areas were bought to spend time with students from majority Sinhala speaking areas in a 7-day friendship program. The results of this initiative were fruitful as it was noticed that the students had a better image of each other at the end of this program as compared to when they joined the program (Aturupane 2011).

These programs highlight an important aspect that even though in countries around the world peace education programs are being adopted the ones that have been adopted in the form of practical activities considering the local context of the country and the history of conflict are more successful than those which are broadly just focusing on curriculum reforms.

1.4   Research Objectives

1. To study and analyze the phenomenon of extremism in universities of Pakistan, and its manifestation.
2. To analyze the main drivers behind the issue of extremism in universities of Pakistan.
3. To examine the counter-extremism policies and the implications of the utilization of peace education as a tool to mitigate this issue.

1.5   Research Questions

1. What is the understanding of the phenomenon of extremism with respect to Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan?
2. What are the key drivers of the phenomenon of extremism in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan?

3. What are the counter-measures that can be adopted in light of peace education to counter extremism in universities?

1.6 Research Significance

At present, there is no direct research that adopts a mixed-method approach to study the phenomenon of extremism in universities. The proposed research will help to fill that gap in the literature. Furthermore, despite a lot of extensive research on the drivers and countermeasures, there has been a lack of understanding of how the phenomenon of extremism is being manifested in universities. Additionally, this research is significant as it brings the attention of its readers to a phenomenon that the society of Pakistan is currently grappling with. Lastly, by taking the viewpoints of different stakeholders, the study expands on what can be the drivers of extremism and countermeasures that could prove to be beneficial for effective policy-making and mitigation of the phenomenon in the universities of Pakistan.

Chapter 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Defining Extremism

The definitions of terminologies of terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism are so diverse that they are often used interchangeably even though they all are very distinctive (Leigh 2015). Hence, it is imperative to draw a distinctive line between these concepts. The concept of extremism is central to this thesis and is generally, defined as activities involving beliefs, actions, feelings, and emotions that are far from the ordinary. However, who is an extremist, and what activities are considered ordinary are again subjective and political matters (Coleman and Bartoli 2015). This terminology is more specifically defined in this thesis as a belief that the in-group survival and success cannot be separated from taking hostile actions against the out-group (Berger 2018). The hostile act can range from using verbal attacks to discriminatory behavior to even resorting to the use of violence. This definition draws upon the work of J.M. Berger. One of the core aspects of this definition is in-group and out-group, and the relation among them. Berger (2018) defines an in-group as a group of people sharing the same beliefs, traits, and practices while an out-group is constructed based on the narrative building by an in-group. However, it is imperative to note that the formation of an out-group does not mean that the in-group will automatically start taking extremist actions against them. However, it can be done through defining the out-group beliefs and practices using negative undertones, mixing truth with interpretation and fiction. Furthermore, for this particular research extremism is not limited to be solely inspired by religion, ethnicity or politics but rather encompasses all of them , and does not aim to differentiate between them.

The main elements of the definition used by the researcher are extracted from the social identity theory which is elaborated below.

2.2   Social Identity Theory

This theory was first proposed by Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner working in the field of psychology to elucidate how individuals derive part of their identity from the group they

belong. According to them, belonging to a certain group explains our behavior and interactions with another group (Hornsey 2008). It was initially presented as an integrative theory aiming to study intergroup conflicts and intergroup relationships while connecting cognitive processes and behavioral motivations (Ellemers 2022).

The theory builds upon three cognitive processes: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Firstly, social categorization highlights the tendency of individuals to divide and categorize themselves into different groups with distinctive characteristics from each other. In the next step, the individuals start to derive parts of their identity from the particular group they belong to and lastly, individuals start comparing their groups with groups. Mostly, in this stage of comparison, individuals start to highlight the positive aspects of their group and degrade the other group (Ellemers 2022). The implications of these processes are that on one hand, it leads to social cohesion among members of an in-group but on the other hand, it also leads to inter-group conflicts based on the competition between different groups for gaining power, status, or resources (Hogg and Williams 2000).

Thus, the social identity theory helps in understanding the intergroup dynamics and conflicts in society while highlighting the role of group formation and how it can lead to conflicts among an in-group and out-group. Another important theory that would help understand the phenomenon of extremism is the social fusion theory.

2.3   Social Fusion Theory

The term social fusion was first used by William Swan and his colleagues. While trying to explain the extreme actions taken on behalf of a group, they elucidated that when the lines between individual identity and group identity become blurred, and an individual's personal and social identity becomes functionally equivalent then it aggravates his/her willingness to opt for extremist behavior on the behalf of the group (William et al 2009). Even though an individual can experience different levels of connectedness with their group fusion presents the most extreme form (Brewer 2002). This theory helps in understanding why individuals resort to extremist behavior, while also shedding light on the importance of constructive social engagement instead of extreme group attachments which can lead to the rise of extremist behavior against the other group.

Therefore, while social identity theory highlights the general trends of intergroup conflicts, social fusion theory explains the specific extremist trends that arise due to an aggravated sense of connectedness with one's group. Both these theories in the thesis help us understand the youth extremism present in Pakistan, especially in the universities.

The following Figure 2.1 further elaborates on how an individual tends to develop extremist attitudes and behaviors.
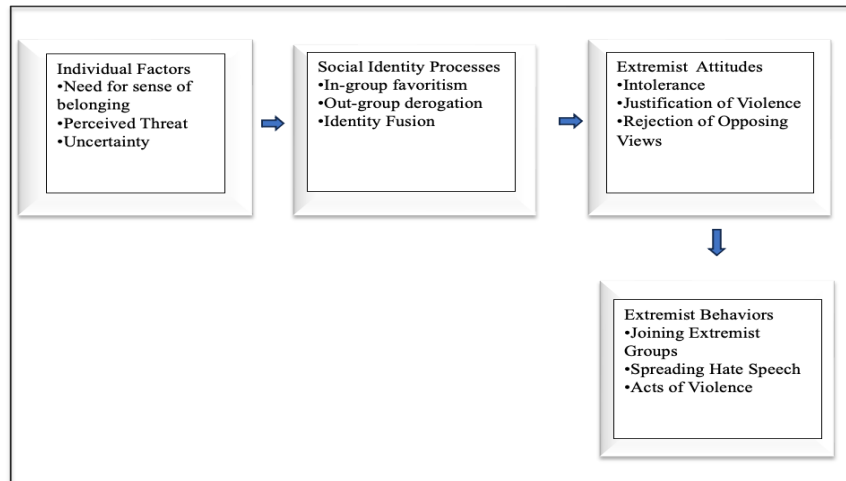
Figure 2.1: Depiction of an Individual's Pathway to Extremism

Source: (Authors Self-Prepared based on Existing Literature)

After discussing the definition of extremism, it is also imperative to discuss what can be the possible factors leading to youth extremism in universities as aforementioned to understand the definition of extremism, it is imperative to look into the context of its causal factors.

2.4   Drivers of Youth Extremism in Universities

The drivers of youth extremism are multi-faceted and diverse. In the case of university students, scholars have identified several push and pull factors causing violent extremism. Ahmed and Jafri (2020) endeavored to provide empirical information that the exposure of university students to hate speech and radical ideologies combined with inter-ethnic group dynamics is leading the students and graduates to extremism and violent extremism. According to them, the political and religious parties in Pakistan have an overwhelming influence in the universities from administration to teaching matters in order to show their presence among the educated lot of Pakistan. This strong presence reinforces the group identities among the students and often clashes erupt between them which mostly intensify the level of violence. Like, in 2017, Islamic

Jamaat Talaba ransacked a cultural event of Pashtun and Baloch students at the University of Punjab. Hence, reinforced group identities led to exploitative competition among the students and resulted mostly in violent clashes.

To further strengthen their argument, the same scholars did a study in two universities that are known for the on-campus violent clashes happening in the past and recent years. Both of these universities have a strong presence of inter-group dynamics. Quaid-e-Azam University was closed in 2017, and International Islamic Universities in 2011 for months as a result of one of the clashes among the students which turned violent. Further elaborating on the group dynamics, the scholars entailed that Quaid-e-Azam University has a strong presence of politically motivated groups while International Islamic University is a hub of religion-based groups. The key findings of the study highlighted the presence of violent clashes at both universities, as 59% of students from both universities agreed to have been exposed to violence. Another key finding was the presence of hate speech and extremist material, where 35.71% of students from IIUI agreed to have been exposed to such kind of material (Ahmed and Jafri 2020). Agreeing with the point of the presence of extremist ideas, Saleem (2021) revealed that inside the Higher Education Institutes, a lot of biased religious teachings were being preached tilting them towards extremist views and ultimately tuning them for acts of violence.

On the question of drivers of violent extremism in universities, most students agreed that poor governance and poverty combined with the presence of exploitative inter-group dynamics are the major causes. The study further revealed that the students of IIUI are more prone to recruitment than the Quaid-e-Azam University as firstly both universities are different in nature and secondly, the inter-group dynamics are different. Nevertheless, the study established that in both these universities, the students have been exposed to violence, and hate speech and also seen the recruitment of their own friends by violent extremist groups (Jafri 2020). Khan (2019) while studying the causes of extremism in educational institutions identified poor governance, social marginalization, and oppression of human rights to be the integral factors. According to him, in case of poor governance when the state starts defaulting on providing basic necessities to its citizens, it creates a vacuum that is quickly filled by the extremist groups who by exploiting these basic needs of citizens make them join these extremist groups. In the case of social marginalization, it gives rise to powerful fragmented identities which become the backbone for sustaining the violent extremism group's narratives. In the case of human rights abuses, the grievances of people and the desire for revenge can become an integral motivation

for the formulation of extremist groups. In this way, according to the scholar, all these three factors play a key role in first formulation of extremist ideologies and then violent extremist groups within and outside the university campuses. (Khan 2019). Similarly, Atif (2019) identified the causes of violent extremism on the university campus to be the presence of informal social groups, lack of proper supervision and regulation, and extremist course material. The social groups are based on religious, ethnic, and political identities, which the students more often get affiliated to because of peer pressure or the basic need of having an identity to adhere to. The presence of these heterogeneous groups combined with a lack of curriculum that promotes tolerance and anti-extremist views end up in violent clashes between these groups. Additionally, the lack of supervision provides the students with safe spaces to advocate their extremist ideologies. According to the scholars, in order to mitigate these issues, one has to make strict rules and regulations along with advocating for changes in curriculum that promote harmony and acceptance towards each other's ideas, or else innocent lives like that of Mashal Khan will be lost in the name of violent extremism on university grounds (Atif et al 2019).

Fatima (2021) gave traditional methods of teaching that do not instill the capability of critical thinking as a main driver of extremism on university campuses. According to her findings, when the ability to independently think and analyze is blocked, the students become more prone to falling for extremist ideologies. Hence, the major driver of violent extremism is outdated syllabi and teaching methods. Closely linked to her argument, Ashraf (2010) argued that the educational policies of Pakistan inculcated extremist narratives in the madrassahs, and universities preaching Islamic studies, leading to the emergence of violent extremism on the educational front.

To sum it up, the majority of the scholars see the presence of groups based on different identities and the lack of curricula that promote the ability of critical thinking and the values of harmony as the main driving forces behind the growing extremism on grounds of Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan. Especially the universities where these identities are reinforced such as the IIUI where the religious-based groups are active and Quaid-e-Azam University where political-driven groups are active to exploit the young minds.

In the following part, the concept of peace education is established. As peace education could be a counter-measure to extremism hence, the researcher has discussed its definition, its tenants, and its role in mitigating extremism in educational institutions.

2.5   Link Between Education and Extremism

Dala Lamai after the 9/11 incident, while commenting on the response to extremism said "*If the mind is more open, it will be less fearful. Education is the key to bridging the gap between perception and reality*". Ford articulates that education is the tunnel that transports a person from the realm of extremism to the world of peace by developing in them critical thinking and an open mind towards others. Similarly, Elie Wiesel, commented that the main attraction of young people towards terrorism is because they simplify things. They have answers but no questions. Hence, education is the way to eliminate terrorism (Ford 2017). Reflecting on peace education as a means to counter violent extremism and promote reconciliation in conflict-prone zones, Salomon stated that the societies trapped in intractable societies should promote peace education to advance reconciliation and peace-making among the different actors of the societies (Salomon 2002). Hence, the main goal of peace education in conflict-prone zones where the levels of extremism are high should be to enhance the values of peacemaking and to promote the values and skills that end up in positive interaction between the different groups of the societies involved in the conflict.

One of the prominent end goals of peace education is to counter extremism. Commenting on this, Shivali Lawale (2020) mentions that the youth bulge in the Gulf countries is a double-edged sword where it can on one hand act as a huge human capital or it can conversely act as a demographic disaster hence, it's necessary for education intervention in peace processes to make sure that the inclination towards extremism and radicalization is mitigated. In addition, the scholar elucidated that merely a *copy /paste* and one-size-fits-all all approach can't work. It's not necessary to apply a Western education system rather a localized model would be efficient where the peace education intervention is formed after looking into the push and pull factors of extremism in the state.

2.6   Peace Education

For this research, the researcher defines peace through the critical peace education theory. It is basically inspired by the work of critical pedagogy which aims to emancipate the individuals and help them become the transformative agents in the society to fight for their rights and to become the peace bearers in the society. While defining critical peace education theory, scholar Michael Rivage–Seul states that *critical peace education takes a different approach than Western universalistic and humanistic values, it rather focuses on local context and tries to*

give voice to the silenced and marginalized group of society. The focus of peace education is on improvising it to the local context because as discussed previously, there could be different factors behind the violence occurring in society be it direct violence, structural or cultural violence hence, it's rather vital to study what area needs to be the focus of peace education programs.

> Closely related to it, is the work of scholars David Johnson and Roger Johnson who looked into the essential components of peace education and how peace can be established in a society. According to them, peace education can be achieved through 5 of its key elements. First, it needs to be inculcated in a public education system, where all the youth from different identities who went through a conflict get the chance to have positive interactions with each other. Secondly, they must be taught how to make a constructive decision in their individual capacity or along the political discourse. The third and fourth component is based on inculcating civic values, and a sense of mutuality among the students so they feel no enmity towards each other. Lastly, the scholars focused on teaching mediation skills which can help the students to resolve any conflict ranging from intra to interpersonal level in an efficient way. Overall, these components and peace education according to the scholars lead to consensual peace which is long-term and sustainable (Johnson et al 2009).

Similarly, Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) elucidated that there are two prerequisites for successful implementation of peace education programs. One is socio-political conditions and the other one is educational conditions, if they are present in the society direct model of peace education is perfect to apply. However, if even one of them is not ripened enough it's better to apply the indirect model of peace education. The difference between both these models is that one of them advocates values such as democracy, and freedom of speech while the indirect model is more focused on five main elements; building reflective thinking, conflict resolution mechanism, inculcating tolerance, and ethno-empathy, and respect for human rights. This model can be utilized to apply peace education programs in the states where the education and political sectors are not stable or ripened enough to adapt the peace education programs wholly. Hence, the elements of peace education can be explored to investigate their role in mitigating extremism in universities.

2.7   Visual Representation of Conceptual Framework

The following figure depicts the conceptual framework to explore the relationship between the phenomenon of extremism in universities, its driving factors, and the countermeasures in the light of peace education. Through the analysis of the aforementioned drivers of extremism in literature, the researcher is going to test the hypothesis that these factors are really causing extremism in universities while also looking into the implications of opting for elements of peace education as a countermeasure to the phenomenon of extremism.

Driving Factors

1. Bad Governance
2. Social Marginalization
3. Inter-group Dynamics
4. Biased Religious Teachings
5. Influence of Pressure groups
6. Traditional Methods of Teachings

Counter Measures

1. Emancipation of Marginalized Groups
2. Instilling Critical Thinking Among Students
3. Teaching Conflict Resolution Skills in Universities

Extremism

| Independent Variables | Dependent Variables |

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: (Authors Self-Prepared Based on Existing Literature)

Chapter 3

EXTREMISM: A CASE OF UNIVERSITIES OF PAKISTAN

3.1   Introduction

As discussed, Pakistan has been remained the victim of terrorism and extremism since 9/11, and although it has remained successful in bringing down the number of terrorist incidents, the state now faces the pernicious threat of extremism which is seen affecting the whole society of Pakistan. As the focus of this research is focused on educational institutions, this chapter will delve into exploring the effects of extremism in educational institutions, and the counter policies taken by the government to mitigate them.

In the initial stages, Vestenkov (2018) elaborates that the interventions were purely focused on madrassahs in Pakistan. Since the event of 9/11, madrassahs have been seen to be the breeding grounds of extremism and the incubators of violent extremism. With no proper registrations of the existence of various madrassahs, combined with a lack of accountability of financing, plus the trust deficit between the government and this madrassah ended up making them hard to monitor and oversight. Hence, they were labeled as being the source of the problem. Multiple reforms were introduced over time as the root cause of the evil was seen to be the madrassahs and their students, which not only alienated them but diverted the focus of government from the main issue. However, the government through a series of hard lessons learned that the issue wasn't the madrassah system only instead there were flaws in the whole education system which made it easy for violent extremist groups to actively recruit and exploit the educated youth (Vestenskov 2018).

Some scholars in Pakistan agree that madrassahs are the hub of extremism and radicalization however few state that to some extent it is true that madrassahs have led to the nourishment of extremist thoughts however, in the past several years, Higher Education Institutions have seen the main contributors of extremism (Hoodbhoy 2017). Similarly, Siddiqa (2010) by collecting empirical data from elite private universities in Pakistan revealed that the educated youth studying in these universities suffer from exclusivity rather than inclusivity and are often prone

to adopting extremist attitudes about others through popular discourse. This study also highlighted that the growing tendency of extremism among youth was not limited to madrassah.

3.2 Cases of Active Recruitment and Violent Clashes on Campuses

A lot of incidents of violent extremism that occurred on-campus at Higher Education Institutions further solidified the argument that madrassahs were not the only place used as a breeding ground for violent extremists. Some of the famous cases in which university students were convicted in direct involvement of violent extremist activities in the country are given below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: *List of Students Involved in Violent Extremist Activities*

SrNo.	Name	University	Description	Reference
1.	Saad Aziz	IBA, Karachi	Found to be second-in-command of the militant group known as Tahir Saeen Group. Mainly known for its involvement in the Safoora Goth Massacre resulting in the deaths of 43 people belonging to the Ismaili Shia sect.	(Rehman 2015)
2.	Azhar Ishrat	Electronic Engineering from Sir Syed University, Karachi	Part of the Tahir Saeen Group, aided the group through his expertise in bomb-making	(Rehman 2015)
3.	Hafiz Nasir	MSc in Islamic Studies from the University of Karachi	Another member of the Tahir Saeen Group involved in formulating and executing the terrorist attacks	(Rehman 2015)
4.	Nooren Laghari	Medical Student at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences, Lahore	Found to be recruited as a suicide bomber by the ISIS	(Gabol and Khan 2017)
5.	Bushra Cheema	MPhil Islamic Studies from Punjab University, Lahore	Affiliated with ISIS, caught training and sending Jihadis to Syria	(Cheema 2015)

6.	Adnan Adil	Student of Sharia Law at IIUI	Part of Al-Qaeda Islamabad cell	(Accused in prosecutor murder case indicted 2013)
7.	Abdul Kareem Saroosh Siddiqui	Student of Applied Physics at University of Karachi	Part of Ansar ul Shariah Group, involved in target killings	(Ali and Baloch 2017)
8.	Hammad Adil	Student of Sharia Law at IIUI	Part of Al-Qaeda Islamabad cell	(Accused in prosecutor murder case indicted 2013)
9.	Abdullah Omer	Student of Islamic Sharia Law at IIUI	Leader of Al-Qaeda Islamabad Cell	(Accused in prosecutor murder case indicted 2013)

Apart from the student, there have been reports of educators at the Higher Education Institutions who were found to be leading or taking part in militant groups around the world. Some of the renowned names of university teachers who were involved in these extremist activities are given below in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: *Renowned Universities Professors Engaged in Extremist Activities*

Sr No	Name	Designation and Description	References
1.	Irtyaz Gillani	Professor at International Islamic University, Islamabad. Associated with the Al-Qaeda cell in Islamabad	(Azeem 2013)
2.	Hafiz Saeed	Professor at UET, Lahore Involved in the planning and execution of the Mumbai Attacks in 2008	(Who is Hafiz Saeed and why his conviction matter 2020)
3.	Ghalib Atta	Associate Professor at Punjab University Member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir Group	(Pakistan Varsity Professor Ghalib Ata held for Islamist links 2015)

4.	Awais Raheel	Professor at SZABIST University, Karachi Member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir group (based on the International Islamist movement, this group has been banned from several Muslim countries due to its involvement in violent acts of terror)	(A mindset without boundaries 2017)

Reflecting on this issue of universities becoming recruitment grounds for violent extremism and growing extremism among youth, it is necessary to mention that 46% of the militants from the Middle East were university graduates and 45% of them were engineers (Gambetta and Hertog 2017). Similarly, in the worst 5 terrorist cases that occurred around the world involving the World Trade Centre Attack in 1993, the Bali Attack in 2002, the London Bombing in 2005, and the attack on two US embassies in Africa 5% of perpetrators got their PhD from renowned universities. Zahid (2017) talking about the radicalization happening on university campuses in Pakistan elucidated that recently many self-radicalized cells and lone wolf terrorists who held affiliation with Islamic State of Khurasan (ISK), Islamic State Afghanistan-Pakistan Chapter have been neutralized in major cities, among them mostly were university students or graduates. Therefore, a new tide of young jihadists has been emerging from the university campuses. One of the shocking incidents that clearly pointed towards aggravated extremism on university grounds is the killing of Mashal Khan, a student of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan who was lynched by the mob at his university campus on the accusation of blasphemy which were all found to be false by the Joint Investigation Team. This brutal murder involved more than 60 people who were identified by the videos by the JIT (Firdous 2017). This was one of the shocking incidents that indicated the prevailing extremism and intolerance among the youth.

The frequency and number of such incidents further prove that the presence of the phenomenon of extremism in universities of Pakistan is an irrefutable fact and can be found within most of the universities. The subsequent examples of a few violent clashes that happened at Quaid-e-Azam University and International Islamic University demonstrate that most of this extremist behavior happening on campuses is due to the extreme form of fusion with an individual's group identity.

Table 3.4: *Examples of Violent Clashes at QAU and IIUI*

University	Year	Description	References
Quaid- e-Azam University	2016	The campus was closed down after students protested and struck for 3 days straight in order to give patronage to a student organization with extremist ideology that was formed by a group of faculty members which the administration rejected.	(Ghani 2016)
	2017	A huge violent clash occurred in the university's hostels where during a general meeting, the head of Sindh Council instigated Sindhi students with hate speech against Balochi students ending up in a huge violent clash between Sindhi and Balochi students. A gun was also recovered and bullets were exchanged between both groups.	(Altaf 2017)
	1st March, 2023	A minor conflict between a Baloch student and a Pashtun student ended up in a huge violent clash where students of Baloch and Pashtun ethnicities attacked each other with harmful tools including batons and sticks. The university remained closed for weeks due to the intensity of the clash.	(Naqvi 2023)
	28th Oct 2023	Members of an ethnic group barged into the university's mosque to attack two students of other ethnicity injuring them. The complaint lodged alleged that one student was abducted and another attacked in the university mosque. The quarrel was between two ethnic groups.	(Students injured in campus clash 2023)
International Islamic University, Islamabad	2019	A clash between two student unions, led to the death of one student while many were injured. The videos circulated on social media showed students using guns and firing at each other. The fight occurred between a group of Jamaat-e-Islami and Saraiki Student Council.	(Bhatti 2019)
	2022	Another major violent clash broke out between IJT and the United Students Front (USF) while USF was leading a peace march. The students sustained severe injuries and it was reported that the students	(Eight Students injured in a clash between two students at IIUI 2022)

	2023	Pashtun council members were attacked with sticks and faced hate slogans from IJT students when they organized a commemoration ceremony to pay tribute to the martyrs of the APS massacre that happened back in 2014.	(Student groups clash over APS tribute at IIUI)

After thoroughly looking into the situation of extremism happening on campuses, it is also necessary to look into the countermeasures that have been taken by the government to mitigate this issue.

3.3   Counter Measures: An Analysis of the National Education Policies (2009-2024) to Mitigate Extremism

3.3.1   National Education Policy 2009

While talking about the growing extremism on educational grounds, it's vital to look into the policies and efforts that were made by the government in order to administer and tackle the roots of this issue. There are three main policy frameworks that are put forward by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training including the National Education Policy of 2009, 2017, and 2018. The first important policy framework was presented on the 1ˢᵗ of August,2009 consisting of strands of education policies existing since 1947. This policy was systematically formulated to address the emerging challenges that surged in the absence of an orderly implementation strategy and, endeavored to inculcate principles that abide by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Samra Bashir (2022) commented that the main commitment was to foster the youth in such a manner that they turn out to be broad-minded critical thinkers, and peace-loving citizens amenable to diverse cultures without prejudices and grievances against each other. Not only this but some features of peace education were also identified in the National Education Policy of 2009. This is reflected by its commitment to incorporating Islamic values of tolerance and equality in the course of Islamic studies or the inclusion of concepts of morality, and social justice in the overall curriculum. These specific policy actions were for curriculum making of schools and colleges. Apart from this, it also focused on the inclusion of diverse cultures of Pakistan in the curriculum addressing the cultural sensitivities to enhance the cultural and religious harmony among the students. Another milestone was the addition of human rights in the curriculum which was debated comprehensively in the policy brief of 2009.

Environmental education was also included explicitly in the education policy of 2009 owing to the domestic and global attention to the issue (Pakistan, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2009).

3.3.2 National Education Policy 2017 and Educational Framework 2018

The national education policy of 2017 was put forward as a vision of educational approach of the state of Pakistan till 2025. Plus, the 2009 policy had to revised to inculcate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the UN. It aimed to foster and cultivate inter-faith harmony and inter-sect harmony along with celebrating the diversity of faiths present within Pakistan. Furthermore, it focused on increasing literacy among the youth in addition to inculcation of values of harmony, peace, and tolerance in the overall curriculum (Pakistan, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2017). A year later in 2018, an educational framework was put forth mainly focusing on three main challenges faced by the educational sector such as out-of-school children, and lack of quality education at the tertiary level didn't include any mention of growing extremism as a challenge to the education sector of Pakistan (Pakistan. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2018).

3.3.3 NACTA and Higher Education Commission

As NACTA (National Counter-Terrorism Authority) is the only government body created to aid in formulating counter-violent extremism, it is imperative to look into the effort put forward by it to mitigate this issue of extremism. A much-needed positive step was observed to be the Letter of Intent signed between the National Anti-Terrorism Authority and the Higher Education Commission. National Anti-Terrorism Authority which is responsible for developing, planning, coordinating, and implementing counter-extremism and terrorism policies has in the past been focused on only bringing the madrassah reforms. This LoI signed in 2018 was done to promote the faculty members and students from HEIs to conduct research in order to develop a comprehensive national strategy to counter on-campus violent extremism. Acknowledging the emerging issue of violent extremism on the educational front.

3.4   Issues with the Counter Measure Initiatives

Some of the shortcomings are highlighted in this part of the education policies from 2009 onwards. Firstly, the strategic visions and policies discussed in NEP 2009 were limited to

schools and colleges while in the case of Higher Education Institutions, apart from a desideratum of equal opportunities and quota for both genders and all provinces, there was no other mention of policies or strategy for dealing with any issue of violent extremism on campus. Since the problem of violent extremism was not cognized in the education sector at that time the cases of violent extremism kept on increasing in the higher education institutions due to the absence of short-term and long-term policies or planning.

Further commenting on this, other scholars have argued that the reason for the failure of the National Education Policy (2009) to address the issue of extremism is its focus on Islamic studies only and the addition of peace values in its curriculum only limiting the scope of peace education to Islamic studies. An improvement was made in the follow-up policy of 2017, yet again it remained futile due to its failure to come up with a plan to integrate the values of harmony and tolerance in the national curriculum. What the policymakers and implementors are lacking is the provision of an enabling environment for peace education to foster in the state. By enabling environment, the scholars mean the preparation of policies and implementation plans that aim to encourage the knowledge and skills that can foster conditions that are conducive to peace and prevent the children from taking the violent path to resolving their conflicts instead of resolving them peacefully (Ahmed, n.d)). With the state declaring an education emergency in 2011 and the presence of violent extremism factors in Higher Education Institutions, it is need of hour to revise the National Education Policies and come up with policies that provide implementation plans with a specific timeline to achieve the short-term and long-term goals to inculcate peace education in the general curricula, in addition to more study and research done in this field to come up with the practical and effective solutions for this issue.

Even in the non-kinetic domain of the revised National Action Policy (2021) by NACTA, there is no mention of any measures to be taken to mitigate the rising issue of violent extremism in educational institutions yet again it pivoted its focus to madrassahs only. However, mere conferences and consultations couldn't bring effective and positive results because the issue at hand is much more complex and needs the collaboration of teachers, students, and scholars to understand its driving factors and mechanism to generate counter and prevention measures which again if only implemented with proper planning and strategies would prove to be fruitful (Nasir 2020).

3.4   Conclusion

To sum up the whole argument, the issue of extremism in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan is critical and a persistent threat which if not dealt with the right policies and tools can end up turning the education grounds of Pakistan into breeding grounds of violence and terrorism. Two examples where recently such violent activities have been recorded include Quaid-e-Azam University and International Islamic University. The former one remained closed for months in 2023 due to a clash that turned violent among two student groups: Baloch and Pashtun students (Saeed, 2023). The other university reported a violent clash in 2019 where one student was killed, and several were injured over a conflict while conducting an event (Azeem 2019). Such violent clashes at these renowned universities located in the capital of Pakistan expose the worsening situation of the university campus's environment. Hence, there is an exigent need for digging deep into understanding the effects of extremism on these campuses and possible measures that can help in mitigating the issue such as mainstreaming elements of critical peace education among university students.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to outline the methodological procedures undertaken to explore whether the phenomenon of extremism exists in the universities of Pakistan. Additionally, it is utilized to explore the relationship between on-campus extremism, its key drivers, and its countermeasures. Bryman (2012) defines research design as the framework of data collection and its analysis during the course of the research study. Thus, this chapter will first shed light on the research approach followed by the sampling techniques, and data collection tools accompanied by the data analysis method. Lastly, it would highlight some of the limitations of research and ethical considerations undertaken to conduct the research.

4.1 Research Design

For conducting research, just mentioning the research method is not enough. The researcher must also decide on the type of inquiry within the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method which provides the specific direction for the procedures in research. For this research, the researcher used the convergent parallel mixed method. This is done when the qualitative and quantitative data are both gathered at almost the same time period and then combined to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell 2014). The qualitative and quantitative data findings might contradict or be congruent which are then explained. Choosing this research design for this research will not only probe why the problem of extremism is serious in universities but also show them how through the lens of experts and students. The findings could also be compared and discussed to reflect how the understanding of the phenomenon is undertaken and how is it being manifested in reality.

4.2 Research Approach

In simple terms, the research method is just a procedure for the collection of data (Bryman 2012). This particular study is mixed method in nature as it will be utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Creswell (2014) describes the mixed method approach as the one

combining and integrating qualitative and quantitative research, and data in an academic exploration. Furthermore, a mixed method approach is opted for when the researcher is assured that neither qualitative nor quantitative methods alone can deal with the complexities of the research problem.

To further elaborate on this, the qualitative method in this particular research was utilized to elucidate the general understanding regarding the phenomenon of extremism in universities including its drivers and countermeasures. Taking into consideration the subjective nature of extremism, it was necessary to not just reflect the data through statistical numbers but to also understand the in-depth insights gained. In this way, while quantitative data provided statistically significant numbers, the qualitative data explained the why behind those numbers. On the other hand, if only the qualitative method was used, it wouldn't be enough to justify that indeed the phenomenon of extremism exists in the sample area of research without reflecting upon the specific statistical numbers that demonstrated how much. Hence, utilizing a mixed method approach for this research enriches the understanding of the phenomenon along with revealing the trends and statistical data, to provide a holistic picture of what, why, and how much.

4.3   Data Collection Tools

Data collection is one of the key steps of the research process (Bryman 2012). There are several ways through which the data can be collected during the research. For this particular research, the primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Interviews are commonly used in social research where the researcher aims to gain in-depth insights and nuanced data regarding the research problem unlike surveys (Herrington and Daubenmire 2014). For this study, a total of 6 expert interviews were taken along with 1 from the professor of Quaid-e-Azam University. The interviews were semi-structured and spanned from 20 minutes to 30 minutes in total.

Focused group discussion is used to gather data in the form of opinions from a selected group of people on a particular topic (Basnet 2018). While conducting the focused group, the researcher encourages a free discussion around the topic and makes sure that everyone equally participates during the discussion phase (Neville 2007). Two focused group discussions were conducted with students within the premises of Quaid-e-Azam University. The selection of participants was done on the basis of their gender and on the basis of their strong grip on the

subject under discussion. Both of them were conducted and recorded on the 3rd of June,2024. One focused group included 4 male students and the other had 4 female students. The distribution criteria were set in this way so that the data reflects the equal representation of both genders as the phenomenon of extremism affects both male and female students on campuses. A number of questions were asked to understand whether the students were getting affected by the phenomenon of extremism and did they have exposure to the phenomenon on their campus. The focused group discussion lasted for 13-15 minutes and the chief mediator was the researcher involved in both asking questions and managing recording equipment.

The survey is a type of quantitative method that involves collecting standardized data from the sample population of the study by making use of structured questions (Holm 2019). For this study, a survey consisting of a total of 25 questions was formed and distributed into three sections. The first section dealt with the phenomenon of extremism on campuses and was based on eight questions that reflected the indicators of the presence of the phenomenon. The second section dealing with the drivers of extremism was based upon five questions trying to gauge the root causes of extremism in the Higher Education Institutions. Lastly, four questions were asked to address the implications of tackling the issue of extremism through peace education. The questions were made based on the Likert scale to identify the relations between the variables. The participants only after giving their consent were made a part of the study. The surveys were gathered physically from Quaid-e-Azam University and the International Islamic University Female Campus. Due to the institutional policy of the International Islamic University Boys Campus restricting the physical presence of females, the data from there was gathered through online means further discussed in limitations. The survey was administered for the time frame between April to June 2024.

4.4   Data Sampling

Gay et al (2012) define sampling as the process through which a researcher selects a number of participants for the study from a larger population of interest which is thereby presenting the whole population. While sampling is the whole process, the selected number of participants is the sample. There are various types of sampling techniques, for this study, purposive sampling was utilized for the expert interviews and focused group discussion while convenience sampling was done in the case of surveys.

Purposive sampling comes under non-probability sampling where the researcher chooses the sample based on their knowledge and expertise linked with the research objectives (Gay, Mills, and Airasian 2012). Hence, for the interviews, and focused group discussion participants were chosen on the basis of their expertise on the topic under study. One of the benefits of purposive sampling is that it is rather helpful in exploratory research where the empirical evidence is limited. Hence, as the current research is exploratory, choosing purposive sampling for qualitative data was the best option. For surveys, convenience sampling was chosen. It is a type of non-probability sampling where the participants are chosen on the basis of their easy accessibility and availability (Elfil and Negida 2017). This was used because gathering data from a large sample size can be difficult and choosing convenience sampling for more elaboration, the details about the sampling frame and size are given below.

The sampling frame is defined as the specific geographical area or location from where the data is gathered. For this particular study, Quaid-e-Azam University and International Islamic University both were chosen as the sample area from where the survey was collected from the students and then analyzed. One of the most important factors in restricting the sample to only two universities was the time limitation. Moreover, Quaid-e-Azam and International Islamic University both are situated in the capital of Pakistan. Generally, the capital cities have a more diverse population as compared to other cities and are home to different identities (religious/ ethnic). In light of this factor, both universities were chosen from the capital city. Another common thing among them is frequent violent clashes that have been observed as mentioned in chapter 3. Not only violent clashes but there have been cases of active recruitment from the universities too. In addition, the literature suggests that there is a strong presence of political groups in QAU and religious groups in IIUI which are causing the problem of extremism, hence this enabled the researcher to delve into this factor more and, find out whether this was the only reason or not. If these are the factors behind extremism in universities then universities not having them would not have a problem. Additionally, QAU is less restrictive, the institution's policy allows for the existence of different ethnic and religious groups and students are given more freedom. On the other hand, IIUI is more based upon the tenets of religion. Different majors in Islamic studies, Islamic banking, Arabic, etc. are offered which we do not see in QAU. Hence, by taking both these universities the researcher would be able to better reflect upon the two wings of societies: right and left wing. As extremism is extending to one extreme either left or right, by taking these two case studies the researcher was able to reflect on that too.

The sample size was calculated through an online sample size calculator where the confidence level is 95%, the population is 41000, the margin of error is 5.3%, and the population portion is 50 %. By using this, the sample size calculated was 340. Hence, 340 surveys were collected from students of QAU and IIUI, 200 from QAU and 140 from IIUI. The reason behind the smaller number of IIUI students is further explained in the limitations part.

4.5   Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of the data gathered from the experts' interviews and focused group discussion, was done through thematic data analysis. Thematic data analysis is the technique that most researchers in social sciences utilize to interpret their qualitative data (Terry et al 2017). He further elaborates by stating 5 phases of thematic data analysis: The first phase includes familiarizing with the data. In the second phase, codes are generated. During the third phase includes themes are constructed. In the fourth and fifth phases, themes are named, and a report is produced.

The researcher used this technique to analyze the data in the discussion chapter after gathering the data from qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition to it, coded names were used when quoting someone directly from the interviews and focused group discussions . They have been coded as follows :

- Interview Participants: IP-1 (Dr Khurram Iqbal), IP-2 (Dr Sadia Nasir), IP-3 (Dr Fatima Sajjad), IP-4 (Dr Samar Rao), IP-5 (Dr Abdul Basit) , IP-6, IP- 7
- Female Students from first focused group : FSP-1, FSP-2, FSP-3, FSP-4
- Male Students from the second focused group: MSP-1, MSP-2, MSP-3, MSP-4

For the analysis of quantitative data gathered from surveys, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) will be utilized which is a software used for analyzing the statistical data in an efficient and swift manner (Hinton, McCarry, Brownlow 2014). Different type of tests was run in order to better analyze the data. Firstly, descriptive tables were given to give a broader picture of the data. Secondly, bar charts were used to shed light on statistics of indicators of extremism in the case study universities. Next, linear regression analysis was done to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Lastly, a t-test was run to know whether the exposure to extremism differs in both the universities under study or not.

4.6   Research Limitations

The limitations of a research study include the factors that may affect the scope, findings, and results of the research. Some of the limitations of this study are mentioned below:

4.6.1   Time Constraints

The time constraint is the major limitation of the study which also sheds light on the sample size being kept to 340 as a larger sample than that would have taken more time. Additionally, due to the time constraints, the sample area was limited to only two universities.

4.6.2   Access Restrictions

Due to the institutional policy of IIUI boys' campus, restricting female presence the researcher had to gather data through online means. To counter this, the researcher formed a Google docs and got it filled out by the students by sending the link to them through WhatsApp. This issue also led to the lack of focused group discussion from the male campus of IIUI.

4.6.3   Respondents' Reluctance to Participate

As the thesis research questions were focused on the link between extremism and universities, a lot of participants were hesitant to take part in it. An example of this is that many academics of the universities under study signed the consent forms but did not reply or give the interview to the research. A similar problem was observed with the focused group discussions, where many students were approached but were hesitant to do it due to the sensitive nature of the phenomenon under study. This limitation explains the lack of focused group discussion from the students of IIUI as well as those who were concerned about sharing any kind of information that might cause them trouble. Also, the lack of interviews from the educationists of both these universities and a smaller number of sample was also due to the same limitation.

4.6.4   Social Desirability Bias

One of the main research inquiries probed into the opinions and views of focused group participants about the incidents of extremist activities on university campuses. There was a possibility that the answers of the participants reflected the socially accepted views. Also, there could be social desirability bias as the questions were related to the university where they were

continuing their education and wouldn't want to cause any trouble due to any statement against it. However, the researcher tried to best counter it by assuring the students that their identity would remain anonymous and instead pseudonyms would be assigned to them when being quoted in the analysis.

4.7   Ethical Considerations

Finally, ethical considerations in writing research are a must. For that purpose, the participants involved in this research have been asked for consent and transparency as to what the research's objectives are. Additionally, the recording of the interviews will be done with the permission of the interviewee. Plus, the data will be stored in a protected drive and will be shared and documented with the consent of the participants involved. Lastly, proper referencing has been ensured to avoid any plagiarism.

Chapter 5

DATA REPRESENTATION

5.1   Qualitative Data

This chapter explores the phenomenon of extremism happening in universities in Pakistan. In doing so, it aims to provide answers to three integral questions: what is an understanding of the phenomenon of extremism occurring in universities among different stakeholders? What are the primary drivers of extremism in the universities of Pakistan? and lastly to what extent peace education can play its role as a counter-extremism measure along with other measures? The answers are justified through data gathered from primary methodological tools that is semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Furthermore, the data reflects the perspective and practical insights of experts, academics, and students. In the subsequent discussion, the main themes and sub-themes will reflect the data providing logical reasoning and insights. Figure 5.1 below gives a summarized overview of the themes and sub-themes identified.
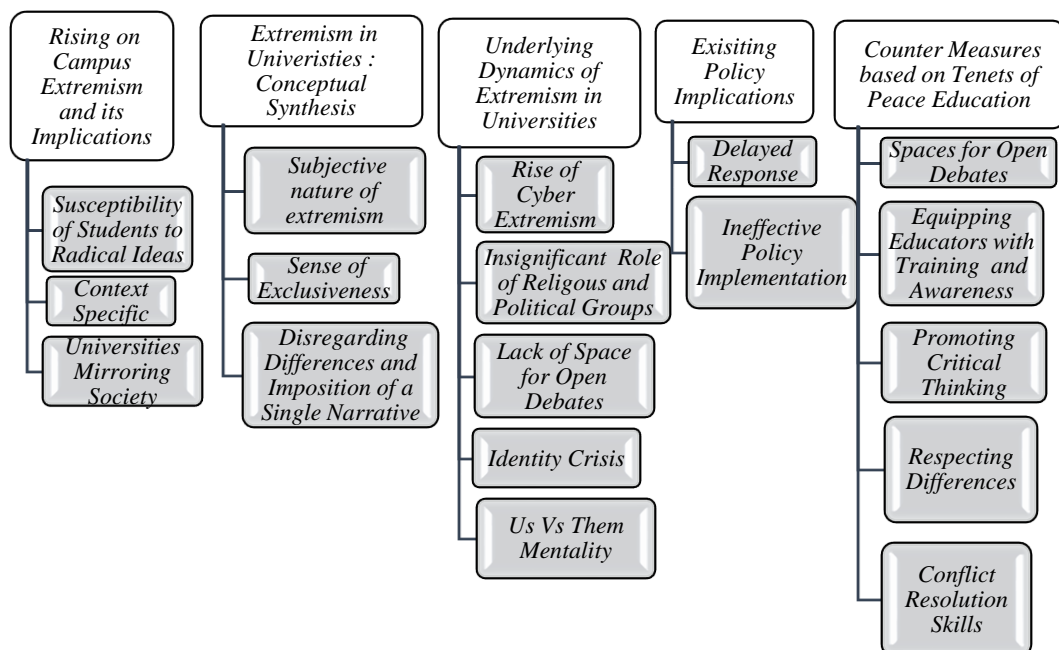
Figure 5.1: Overview of Main Themes and Sub-themes

The first two main themes and their sub-themes aim to shed light on the understanding of the phenomenon of extremism among different stakeholders.

5.2   Rising on Campus Extremism and its Implications

5.2.1   Student's Susceptibility to Radical Ideas in Recent Times

When asked about the phenomenon of extremism happening in universities, most of the respondents agreed with the statement that extremism does exist and is indeed rising in universities all over Pakistan. Extremism within higher education institutions in Pakistan is an increasingly alarming phenomenon that poses significant threats to the academic and social fabric of these institutions.

(IP-4: Dr. Samar Rao, personal communication,31st May,2024)

I don't feel any hesitation to say that universities in Pakistan have become the hub of extremism. Further, he stated youth there are quite vulnerable to the radical idea.

(IP-1: Dr. Khurram Iqbal, personal communication, 22nd April 2024).

 IP-6 also described the phenomenon along the same lines by stating:

> In the educational institutions, what we have witnessed, and I'm sure you must be witnessing it yourself as well. What we have observed is the emotions are highly charged, the negativity amongst the students is more, I would say, it's more prevalent, negative attitude, negative behaviour, sort of non-accommodation, non-responsiveness to even to their own friends. And then there is a lot of aggressive attitude and aggression at the individual level. And then from within the groups, within the education institution itself, there is a lot of aggression that earlier was not present or that was not that prevalent.

(IP-6, 21st May 2024).

Responding by citing different examples of extremist activities happening on campus, one of the respondents stated:

> We have even seen cases in institutions like LUMS. There were Hezbollah people caught there. We have seen radical people emerging from institutions like IBA, the

Institution of Business Administration Saad Aziz studied there. We have seen examples at Punjab University. We have seen examples in Karachi University where the Jamaat-e-Islami section of the Karachi chapter of Jamaat-e-Islam, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami's Karachi chapter transformed into a militant being known as Jundullah. And I can go on and on with examples of Nishtar University, the medical college in Hyderabad, Noreen Lahari studied there, she was radicalized. International Islamic University, Dr. Abdullah Azam, who is Al-Qaeda's, ideological mentor in a way, taught there. Ayman al-Zawahiri studied at the International Islamic University. And the list goes on then. So, across campuses in Pakistan, radicalization has been an issue and continues to be an issue. Looking at recently the ideological ingress of TLP is alarming. Look at the example of Mashal Khan in Mardan's Abdul Wali Khan University. His own class fellows on fake blasphemy charges murdered him ruthlessly. It was mob violence. There are several other examples, for instance, on TLP's instigation and there, you know, provocative rhetoric, students have attacked and killed their teachers by alleging them of blasphemy. There are numerous examples and I think from jihadist groups inspiring radicalization to more mainstream groups like TLP are now trying to instigate radicalism in young students across the gender divide. And then in between, we have seen that from jihadist organizations to TLP, various sectarian outfits like Shia outfits, and Deobandi outfits, had their own student wings who were involved in radicalization as well. Sipha-e-Sahaba had its own wing, Jamaat-e-Islami had its own wing, and different Shia organization had their own wings. I mean, radicalization has come in universities.

(IP-5: Dr. Abdul Basit, personal communication,6th May,2024).

Providing a contrasting viewpoint and focusing on the root cause of incidents in universities to be embedded in primary education, Dr Sadia Nasir elaborated

Now, in Higher Education Institutions, there I see the problem to be not as serious and explicit as it was before. The children who are coming to higher education, have come from the same education stream, which is in schools and colleges. So, their mindset becomes up to there. But when you come to universities, particularly Quaid-e-Azam University, because I am a Quaidian I can tell you that when you come to that university, your horizon broadens. I think that many people automatically go to such places and get de-radicalized.

5.2.2 Context Specific

Another theme that was identified was that the phenomenon of extremism is always context-specific. Expanding on that, Dr. Abdul Basit stated there is no one particular framework across university campuses, the trends will differ. So, it depends on which educational institutions we are talking about (Dr Abdul Basit, personal communication, 6th may,2024). Another respondent mentioned that extremism is contextually dependent. If there is extremism in FATA, Baluchistan there is a reason behind it. For example, in India, there is another form of extremism with another history behind it. It highly depends on the context (Dr. Fatima Sajjad, personal communication).

5.2.3 Universities Reflecting Society

An imperative theme identified was that the extremism that we are observing in the universities mirrors the overall society's issue of having extreme beliefs.

> If you ask me if there is a difference in the manifestation of extremism in society and in higher education institutions, then I see no. I would say that the type of extremism that exists in society, we see the same type of extremism in universities.

(Dr. Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024)

Further agreeing with this observation Dr Abdul Basit opined:

I think radicalization on campuses is not a different phenomenon, that is to say, radicalization on campuses is not in isolation from radicalization that we see across society. So, college and university campuses are part and parcel of our society. People studying on these campuses are the same people who are from our society. So, whether radicalization is at campuses or whether radicalization is in our society, it is an extension of the same phenomena, right? So, you can't have a solution of radicalization in Higher Education Institutions, colleges, and universities in isolation. When there is a reduction of radicalism in your society overall, there will be a reduction of radicalism in universities, colleges, and higher education institutions as well.

(Dr. Abdul Basit, personal communication, 6th May 2024)

Further supporting this argument, one of the interviewee elaborated:

So, there is a tendency that is called radicalization within our own society and community. And of course, the university is privy to it. University definitely also is from the same community and society. So that's the tendency that is prevailing. And this aggression, this sort of, I would say, non-accommodative, non-pluralistic attitude is leading to dissension, fragmentation. And effects the socialization of the individual within the institutions, that is, the university community.

(IP-6, personal communication, 21st May 2024)

5.3 Extremism in Universities: Conceptual Synthesis

5.3.1 Subjective Nature of Extremism

One of the respondents reflecting upon lack of a definite explanation of terminology of who is an extremist stated:

In one of my articles, I pointed out that at some point, there is a reluctance to define this term clearly because there are power dynamics in this. And again, this is a problem who gets to define extremism? Which people get to define extremism and what is the purpose that they are trying to fulfil through that? So, one side of this is that we acknowledge that in our own universities, in our own society, we have a problem. But at the same time, we do know that the problem has been analysed very selectively.

(IP-3:Dr. Fatima Sajjad, personal communication, 1st May 2024)

Correlating to her is the statement given by Dr Sadia Nasir who showed concerns about the definition of extremism that is given by NACTA, the official institutional body that can do so. The definition of NACTA is because generally in Pakistan that is the only definition that comes from the government or its representative institutions. So, the definition of NACTA is too broad and it is difficult to comprehend for a layman.

(Dr Sadia Nasir , personal communication, 23rd April 2024)

The statement reflects that the definition of extremism remains unclear in Pakistan.

5.3.2 Sense of Exclusiveness

One of the imperative themes related to extremism manifestation in universities was the sense of exclusiveness.

> The extremism that is prevalent in Pakistan is of sense of exclusiveness. Or to make others minus if they have a different opinion, different identity, different religion, culture, or language. So, the sense of exclusiveness for yourself and to exclude others. That is the type of extremism that we have in society. That is the type of extremism, same extremism prevails in higher education institutions.

> (Dr. Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024)

Further elaborating on the rising sense of exclusiveness among the students, one of the interviewee mentioned:

> The people are more like, you know, non-accommodative and fragmented. I think this fragmentation is affecting the whole social fabric of the university, where people, individuals, the students earlier would sit together. They were very pluralistic in their approach. They were very accommodating. There was a lot of peer-to-peer exchange and, of course, sharing, which is somehow missing from our community and society today. I mean, it's a sense of exclusiveness among the students nowadays.

> (IP-6, personal communication, 21st May 2024)

5.3.3 Disregarding Differences and Imposition of a Single Narrative

When asked about the understanding of extremism in Higher Education Institutions, one of the respondents stated that is when you are not willing to listen to another point of view and you think your own view is very exclusive and when you do not allow for the possibility of difference.

Further giving examples of her own experience in academia, she mentioned:

> In the years, after the 9/11 incident, I have had very close interactions with young people. So, generally, a few years back, I would sense a problem. They were not willing to listen to the other's perspective. There were tendencies, especially about religion, people were very sensitive. They wouldn't be ready to listen to other people's

perspectives. Being said that having extreme views is wrong but not a problem until someone does not respect the other person viewpoint and tries to impose their own viewpoints on others. When they have this mindset of imposition then they resort to any method to achieve these extreme ideas.

(IP-3:Dr Fatima Sajjad, personal communication, 1st May 2024).

One of the students interviewed, mentioned:

Extremism is basically having radical ideas, not just ideas but also if you prefer some sort of violent actions to pursue certain goals. So, for instance, if you look at Pakistan's universities, if you look at certain councils, Jamiat and all, they do try to force people to do particular activities. For if somebody is celebrating Holi or if somebody is celebrating some sort of other party, for instance in Islamic University, they would force you not to do that. So, this is how you basically, they not only force them but they also beat those guys. So, this is imposing your radical ideas on others.

(FSP-1, Quaid-e-Azam University, 4th June 2024)

5.4 Underlying Dynamics of On-Campus Extremism

5.4.1 Rise of Cyber Extremism

Elaborating on the role of social media in spreading extremism among universities, Dr Khurram stated:

The type of content that is circulating on social media echo chambers is not hidden. The mainstream discourse between religion and politics reinforces extremism which is sourced from religion and politics both. Now when we talk about obviating extremism then definitely our counter strategy's main focus should be given to social media content production and its dissemination.

(Dr. Khurram Iqbal, personal communication, 22nd April 2024)

Another respondent elaborated:

In this day and age of social media, you can't stop the infiltration and ingress of extremist ideas onto and into campuses. It's just impossible. And if there are people

who are really well bent upon consuming such radical materials, it's very difficult to stop them unless someone is, you know, closely observing and monitoring who is reading what. It's not possible to physically stop because it's not physical, it's very intangible. Generally, there is no in-person radicalization taking place now. Rarely there is in-person radicalization. Generally, it is on social media. You have to have a robust framework for cyber radicalization. And that will ensure that these you know, hate material and extremist material do not end up in the hands of these students.

<div style="text-align: right">(Dr. Abdul Basit, personal communication, 6th May 2024)</div>

5.4.2   Limited Role of Religious and Political Groups

When asked about the key drivers of extremism in universities, most of the respondents claimed that there is no significant relationship between pressure groups (religious /political) and extremism.

In Quaid-e-Azam University, there is a role of political parties and religious parties but it is not as prominent or dominating. There are political factors or student unions. On their basis, there is also a fight and that fight is mostly about power acquisition, which group is dominant, and which group will be in decision-making. The reasons are of this kind. Their reasons are usually not religious. There are also fights for ethnic reasons. Usually, they are more power-centric not about religious and political groups.

<div style="text-align: right">(IP-2:Dr. Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024).</div>

Further supporting this claim, another respondent stated:

When it comes to factors and drivers, you would have gone through our research. Other than, QAU and IIUI, we also took samples from Bahria, NDU, Air, and even NUST. These are the universities where there are no political or religious parties influence which means the factor of pressure playing a role in causing extremism can be considered out of this debate and this also points towards the fact that the drivers of extremism are something else.

<div style="text-align: right">(IP-1: Dr Khurram Iqbal, personal communication, 22nd April 2024)</div>

5.4.3 Identity Crisis

Identity crises are particularly prevalent among young adults, who are often in search of a sense of belonging and purpose. Extremist narratives can provide a compelling, albeit dangerous, sense of community and direction (IP-4, personal communication, 31st May 2024).

In addition to it, Dr. Abdul Basit stated:

> The exposure to radical material or access to it doesn't make someone a radical, but if you have an identity crisis and then in search of a meaning of, you know, what does it mean to be a young person? And with that kind of mindset, if you consume such radical material to find that meaning, and if you find that meaning in that literature, that is when people become radical.
>
> (IP-5: Dr Abdul Basit, personal communication, 6th May 2024).

At another place, he elaborated:

> And the root cause of that is, I think, young people are looking for, are searching for a meaning in life. They are looking, you know, they are looking for a sense of belonging and their place in the society. When the state and societies fail to articulate what it means to be a young person in a society, in a country like Pakistan, when they fail to accommodate them and they fail to answer their questions about their identity crisis, perhaps sometimes these organizations are able to provide those answers.
>
> (IP-5: Dr Abdul Basit, personal communication, 6th May 2024).

5.4.4 Us Vs Them Mentality of Students

Reflecting upon the solidified Us vs. Them mentality of students in universities, one of the student explained:

> If you belong to a province like Baluchistan, then since the beginning your perceived nurturing will be such that you will develop an us versus them mentality. You will always have a perceived enemy like you have in Punjab. You feel that all your resources are being used in Punjab and you are being deprived. So, this sense of deprivation impacts your socialization. And when you come to educational

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institutions, rather than representing yourself as a student or as a collectivee, you want to preserve and solidify your ethnicity. And in multi-ethnic communities like Quaid-e-Azam University, the clash is that you have perceived socio-economic disparities from your background. You feel that you perceive all your other ethnic people as an enemy and that they are relying on your resources. So, I believe that institutions are not propagating this. Rather, before coming to Higher Education Institutions, you have already solidified your ideas in different levels of socialization, and not just solidified them, you bring them to an extremist viewpoint.

(FSP 3, QAU, 4th June 2024)

Quoting some examples of incidents that happened between students due to this mindset, the student stated:

In the recent times, there was a fight between two class fellows. The fight started from a room. This happened on 22nd May. They were from different ethnicities. They were Kashmiri boys. They beat up a Punjab boy who belonged to the Punjab National Council. No one knew him but he came on Punjabi Quota because of that the fight started. The Kashmiri student cracked the Punjabi student's head. Later , the Punjabi student came and told the other members of the council. They told him that they are doing a seminar will deal with this later. Most of the senior members went to sleep after the seminar because they didn't sleep at night. I am telling you my personal experience. Then later, Punjabi students came to the social huts. Some boys who were Punjabi juniors. They came to talk but they were too many. There was aggression and again they started fighting with the Kashmiri students. Again, there was bloody fight between those two groups instead of talking it out in peaceful manner.

(MSP-2, QAU, 4th June 2024)

Another example of similar scenario was mentioned by another participant:

I will quote my personal example. There was a student in my class who misbehaved so I complained to HOD and he belonged to the Baloch community. So rather than justifying himself or giving his own stance that he misbehaved. Even if it was a misunderstanding. What he did was he brought his council's chairman to HOD. To pressured him not to say anything because my friends were on my side and they told him that he could not misbehave with me.

But to counter that he didn't even stay as an individual. He didn't clear his own stance. So, this is the problem here. If you are an individual and belong to an ethnic group. Then he will always run towards his ethnic group.

5.4.4   Lack of Space for Open Debates

While talking about having the freedom to debate freely and being provided with a safe environment where students can express themselves, Dr. Fatima stated:

> If you define extremism as closing your mind, you must be willing to have an open space for dialogue in universities. We don't have that space. The people who don't allow that space and come up with an extremist perspective, I am sorry to say that, but a lot of times the people in the state itself, which comes up with one narrative or the other, without preaching the narratives, without practicing those narratives, that becomes a problem. Students are very smart. They can point out these contradictions. If you are working with university students, you must come up with very smart strategies and be genuinely willing to have an open space. I call it the open space for dangerous ideas because dangerous ideas can become less dangerous when you give them an open space and when you engage with them when you are willing to listen to them. Then you can channelize them and offer different possibilities in which they can find ways to transform the conditions which are providing them this cause of grievance.

Similar to this argument, one of the students expressing her grievances stated:

> Institutions have a big flaw that they are not trying to mitigate it. There are no community-engaging activities, where many cultural groups can interact with each other. Everyone should talk about their concerns and others should try to understand them. So, this is through debates that you can coexist. If you debate, if you give each other a chance, rather than looking at some person as inferior, when you understand them, only then the ethnocentric elements within you will be suppressed and you will try to coexist.

5.5   Existing Policy Implications

5.5.1   Delayed Response

Expressing his disappointment with policy formulation and implementation regarding extremism, Dr. Khurram stated that the issue in Pakistan is that extremism is not being included in the priorities of the state. The state institutions are themselves busy in the political engineering of extremist organizations for their own political interest. They are ready to turn such organizations into monsters if it serves their own self-interest. Further expanding on his grievances about the state's poor response, he mentioned:

> Now after 10 years, our state has come to the conclusion that we have to ban this militia called Zainab Yun. The question arises that their return had already started in 2014-15. So, this ban should have been imposed at the same time. But today, in 2024, the state of Pakistan has banned Zainab Yun. So, it speaks volumes about the priorities of the Pakistani state.

(IP-1: Dr Khurram Iqbal, personal communication, 22nd April 2024)

The delay in policies was also identified while interviewing with the expert from NACTA, which is the only institutional body working to mitigate terrorism and extremism in Pakistan. When talking about the NACTA policies with the official from NACTA (IP-7), he mentioned that NACTA has signed different memorandums with universities located in Baluchistan, Swabi, etc. Along with it, the work on the formulation of new policies is underway which was hindered by the government change and elections in 2024.

(IP-7, personal communication, 8th May,2024)

5.5.2   Ineffective Policy Implementation

Discussing the poor policy formation and lack of implementation, Dr. Sadia mentioned:

> if we look at NACTA and HEC, there are many joint agreements, and memorandums, that we will do this and that. There are VC conferences being held in all of them. What is the benefit of a 22-year conference when you know VC will change after 3

years, so when you are not involving students and faculty, then how much change can you expect.

<div align="right">(IP-2: Dr Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024).</div>

Discussing about the efforts but lack of effective implementation, Dr. Samar explained:

NACTA and HEC have made notable efforts to address extremism within educational institutions. These efforts include policy formulation to integrate peace and tolerance education into the curriculum, capacity building through the training of educators to identify and address signs of radicalization, and collaboration with NGOs and international organizations to implement best practices in counter-extremism. However, these efforts need to be expanded and more effectively implemented to achieve substantial results.

<div align="right">(IP-4:Dr Samar Rao, personal communication, 31st May 2024)</div>

5.6 Counter Measures Based on the Tenets of Peace Education

5.6.1 Spaces for Open Debates

There has to be a dialogue around acceptable norms, acceptable normal behaviour, which is moderate, which is balanced, which is accommodative, which is acceptance of the other, which is acceptance of differences (IP-6, personal communication,22nd May,2024).

So, if such activities are more regular where people come and talk about their differences and learn to coexist rather than judging each other, dehumanizing each other, or resorting to violence, more peaceful ways and means of solving their differences through such peace interventions based on various frameworks of peace education can go a long way in mitigating radicalization on university and college campuses as well as Higher Education Institutions.

<div align="right">(Dr. Abdul Basit, personal communication,6th May,2024)</div>

Further elaborating on it, Dr. Sadia opined:

If the teacher is not willing to listen to the students and their concerns, then you cannot preach extremism. You have to really be willing to listen to the students' perspectives

where they are coming from and their experiences. If you engage with them, if you get into an open dialogue with them, if you acknowledge their genuine grievances. Many students in my classes are from different backgrounds, some are coming from FATA, some from Baluchistan, some are from Urban areas, and some are even from the Army. So having that rich background in which diverse people can have an open dialogue, reduces extremism.

(IP-2: Dr Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April, 2024)

Students mentioning the same phenomenon stated:

I think if a platform is given to the children. So that they can speak out their frustrations and their opinions. When they engage with each other, they will communicate through words. Not through text. Instead of fighting. And when you talk to each other. You will learn how to behave. People become violent while talking so they will learn how to speak politely because when engaging with such a big crowd they will be scared of being judged. Hence, they will look into how they behave and will control themselves. And when they control themselves repeatedly, they will learn to accept each other's differences and opinions or even talk about them in a respectable manner instead of fighting.

(MSP-4, QAU, 4th June 2024)

5.6.2 *Equipping Educators with Training and Awareness*

The biggest need for peace education is that it must be focused on the training of trainers, not the training of students (Dr. Khurram, personal communication, 22nd April 2024). Faculty members should receive regular training to recognize and address extremist tendencies and to promote a culture of peace and dialogue within the classroom (Dr. Samar Rao, personal communication,31st May 2024).

Dr Sadia elaborating on it in detail stated:

You train teachers, along with teachers, you train staff, to identify extremist trends, they should know that if I am thinking this, then this is their extremist idea, or I am not excluding anyone, the same goes for universities, in every curriculum, when you take faculty. So, I think, it should be the capacity building of faculty, to identify

if students have such tendencies, then how to tackle them, can we deradicalize them or not, how to help them, how to give them an alternative point of view.

<div align="right">(Dr Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024)</div>

5.6.4 Promoting Critical Thinking

The best defence we can have against extremism, equipping students with a critical consciousness (Dr. Fatima Sajjad, personal communication, 1st May 2024). Curriculum reform is essential, with a focus on incorporating comprehensive peace education and critical thinking modules at all educational levels (Dr. Samar Rao, personal communication, 31st May 2024).

> Through peace education, you can promote peace dialogues where people are encouraged to have an open conversation about different issues related to identity, related to different faith practices, and different social and cultural traditions, and learn to coexist and respect differences of opinion. So, it inculcates an overall, you know, spirit of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, you know, diversity, respect for diversity. And yeah, then that increases social resilience as well.

<div align="right">(Dr. Abdul Basit, personal communication,6th May,2024)</div>

5.6.5 Respecting Differences

As a multi-culture and multi-ethnic state, conflicts in Pakistan are inevitable but we need to learn to accept and respect our differences to move towards prosperity (FSP-3, QAU, 4th June 2024).

> We really need to be talking about this issue of extremism, not only in like, you know, individual, but of course at the societal level as well. We need to discuss it. There has to be a dialogue around acceptable norms, acceptable normal behaviour, which is moderate, which is balanced, which is accommodative, which is acceptance of the other, which is acceptance of differences.

<div align="right">(IP-6, personal communication, 21st May 2024)</div>

> When I talked about capacity building the capacity building of children is accepting differences and co-existing. Our society is diverse, we have religious diversity, and ethnic diversity, linguistic diversity so you don't have to end the diversity that

<div align="center">48</div>

everyone agrees on one thing. You have to co-exist whatever the differences are, you have to accept. Let them live the way they want to, and you can have your own life

(IP-2:Dr. Sadia Nasir, personal communication, 23rd April 2024)

5.6.6   Conflict Resolution Skills

Talking about preaching conflict resolution skills as an important tool to mitigate extremism, IP-6 mentioned:

> In the context of Pakistan, peace education is important, but there is actually a misconception or a misunderstanding around peace education. Peace education in education institutions carries a very different connotation. Because this peace education in the education institution basically is to promote understanding, tolerance, and certain conflict resolution skills among the students. And those conflict resolution skills are at different levels, like, you know, at peer level, within, between the students, between the teacher and the students. So, this is important to understand, and these skills should be actually learned by the students
>
> (IP-6, personal communication, 21st May 2024).

Furthermore, students of QAU mentioned:

> So, at the level of the institution. If you arrange seminars in every department. And all the semesters. If there is a 2nd semester. 4th semester, 6th and 8th. For every semester it should be compulsory to attend those conflict resolution and peace seminars even though there here should be a policy of attendance. When from every semester the students will come and participate in it. and volunteer, they would be speaking and engaging with different communities. So, if you do compulsory things. Everyone should engage in it. Everyone should participate and if every department does this. Of course, it is not a big thing. But at least at the level of the institution. Peace can be created.
>
> (MSP-2, QAU, 4th June 2024).

Chapter 6

ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

This chapter delves into the quantitative data gathered through the surveys to examine the dynamics of the phenomenon of extremism happening in universities. As aforementioned in methodology, the sample area of study remains limited to two universities: ***Quaid-e-Azam University*** and ***International Islamic University, Islamabad***. Starting with descriptive statistics, the researcher presents the key characteristics of the sample and the variables to provide an essential understanding of the data. Followed by inferential analysis which includes regression analysis and t-tests. Both of them are utilized to examine the relationship between the variables and explore the potential influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The independent variables include the key drivers taken from the literature causing the phenomenon of extremism, and the countermeasures which could pave the way for mitigating extremism in universities. The dependent variable is the phenomenon of extremism which is the foundational concept of this thesis. In addition, the independent t-test is used to explore whether the students at both universities are exposed to the phenomenon of extremism or not and which university is more impacted by the phenomenon.

Moving on to the first section of descriptive analysis, in which tables and bar charts are used to shed light on the characteristics of the sample and variables, giving a foundational picture of the data before moving on to understanding the complex relationships between the variables.

6.1   Section 1: Investigating the Phenomenon of Extremism in Universities

Providing descriptive statistics of the sample population is an imperative step while analyzing the quantitative data (Field and Hole 2002). The table below highlights the gender, age, and university of the respondents. The proportion of female respondents is 51.8 which is higher than the males who comprise 48.2 %. As for the age, 88.8% of the respondent are between 18-25 years of age, meaning the sample predominantly is comprised of young adults. As the study is considering the case of only two universities, hence the students belonged to either Quaid-e-Azam University or International Islamic University. The students from QAU are 17.6 % more

than IIUI. The reason for the lower proportion of samples from IIUI is discussed beforehand in the limitations part of the methodology.

Table 6.1: *Descriptive Representation of Respondents Based on Their Age, Gender, and University*

V	F	P (%)	CP	N	M	Std. Dev
Gender				*340*	*1.52*	*.500*
Male	*164*	*48.2*	*48.2*			
Female	*176*	*51.8*	*51.8*			
Age				*340*	*1.12*	*.372*
16-25	*302*	*88.8*	*88.8*			
26-35	*35*	*10.3*	*10.3*			
36-45	*2*	*.6*	*.6*			
46-55	*1*	*.3*	*.3*			
University				*340*	*1.41*	*.493*
QAU	*200*	*58.8*	*58.8*			
IIUI	*140*	*41.2*	*41.2*			

Note: V= Variables, F= frequency, P= percentage, CP= Cumulative Percentage, N= numbers, M= mean, Std. Dev= Standard Deviation.

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.1.1 Aggravating Extremism in Universities

When asked about whether the respondents think that extremism is an issue in universities of Pakistan or not, 50% of the students agreed and 24.4 % of the students strongly agreed that extremism is indeed rising in the universities. This could also be reflected through the recent extremist activities that have occurred across the campuses. For example , recently a huge violent clash occurred in Punjab University on May, 2024 between the Pashtun and Punjabi Council which resulted in injuring many students (Yunis 2024). Not only this, a number of students were also reported to be involved in terrorist activities as aforementioned in Chapter 3. This table reflects the deeply concerning and serious issue at hand as it reveals that even in recent times students are exposed and vulnerable to extremism. This also point towards the inevitable fact that the phenomenon of extremism is indeed in reality a grave concern which should not be neglected and requires immediate response to mitigate it.
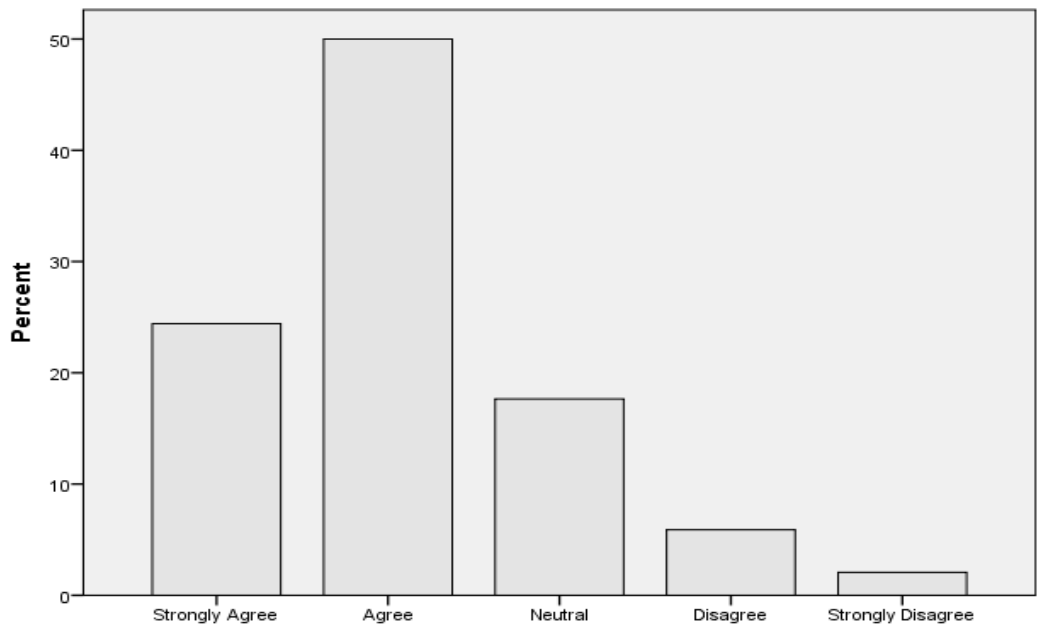
Figure 6.1: Extremism is a Growing Issue in Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.1.2 *Exposure to Hate Speech and Discrimination*

As discussed in Chapter 2, extremism leads to in-group favouritism and out-group derogation. The next question further explored this phenomenon, by asking the student whether they have been ever exposed to hate material and discrimination on the basis of their identity. Interestingly almost 24.4 % agreed and 12.6% strongly agreed to have been exposed to hate speech material in their respective universities. The results are similar to the work of Ahmed and Jafri (2020) who asked the almost same questions as the students of IIUI and QAU. However, this finding is distinctive from the previous statistics. Their study revealed that 35.71 % of students have been exposed while here the statistics are lower. Even though this points towards a lower trend in the presence of hate speech on university campuses however, it is still alarming for the above-mentioned study the data was gathered back in 2018 but the issue still remains prevalent on the university premises despite the fact that 6 years have passed. If the issue remains pervasive even in the years to come, it can deeply affect the academic and social fabric of society.
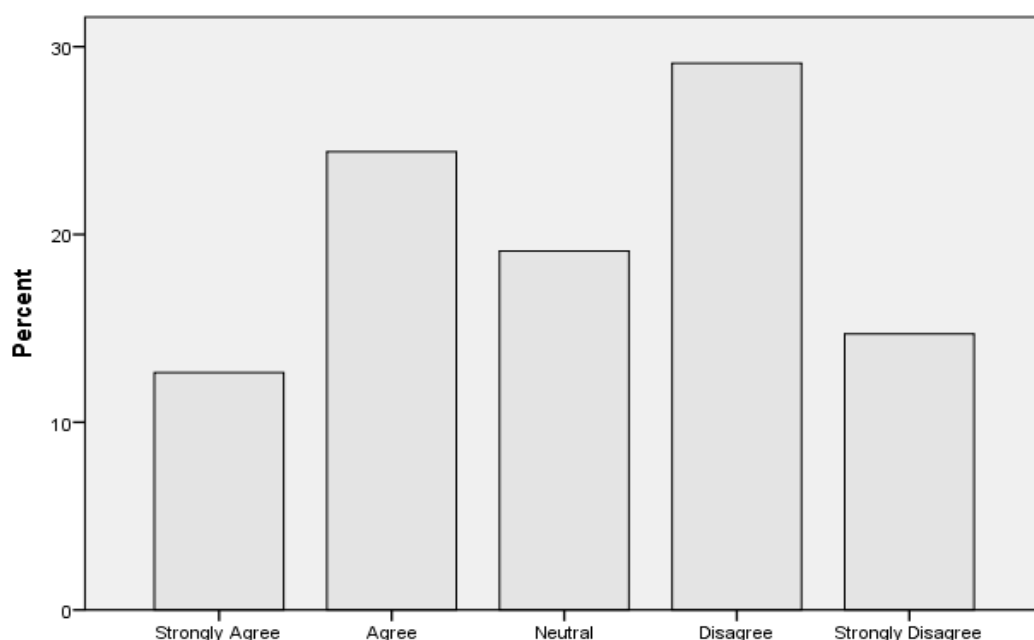
Figure 6.2: Hate Speech and Extremism due to Identity (ethnic/religious)

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.1.3 Extremist Behaviours Observed in the University

The horrors of extremism and terrorism continue to haunt the universities and educational institutions as even after 7 years of the Mashal Khan lynching case on the basis of blasphemy (Firdous 2017), we still see students engaging in violent clashes. Unfortunately, these violent clashes have become increasingly normalized in universities. The data gathered further strengthens the argument as 26.8% of students agreed to have often witnessed them in their university, and 18.5 % of students run into these kinds of clashes very often. The data reveals that little attention has been paid to mitigating and preventing these clashes from happening as the issue still remains unresolved and student life is still affected by these acts of violence. The history of such incidents also reveals the opposing political and religious groups at war with each other who if left without invigilation resort to using violent means to gain their own self-interest (Khan 2012).
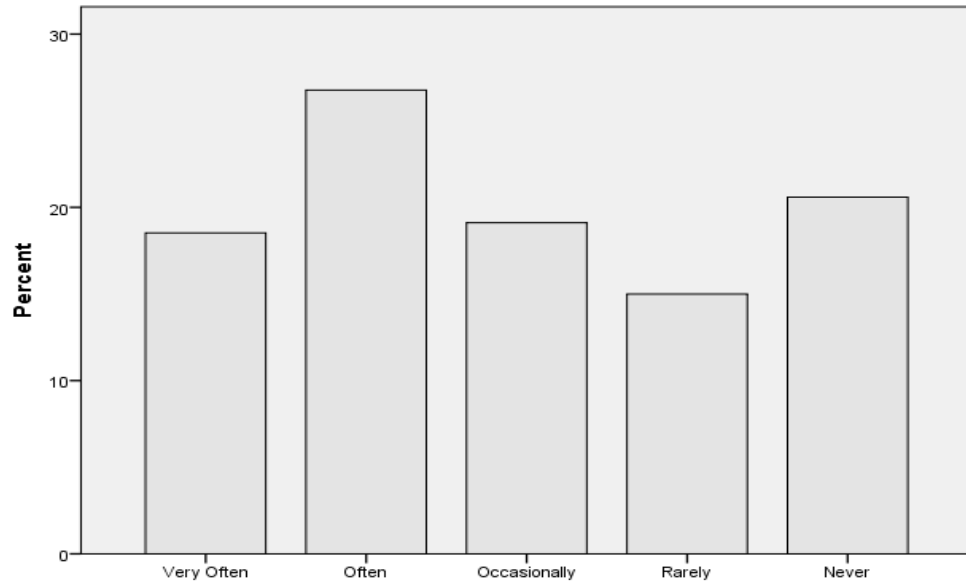
Figure 6.3: How Often Students Witness Violent Clashes in University

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.1.4 Exclusion of Students Based on their Identity

To investigate another important aspect previously mentioned in chapter 2 is of emphasis on in-group's threat from the out-group actions. By instilling, the strong sense of being distinct from the out-group, extremist group's exploit the emotions to create high level of polarization (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008). This could be observed in the data, where the researcher inquired from the students if they ever they feel excluded in their university due to their religious or ethnic identity, and 26.8% agreed to the statement. This reflects the polarization happening on the campuses where students are being excluded just because they belong to certain ethnicity or religious background. If the on campuses polarization persists and students belonging to certain groups continue to be alienated from the mainstream activities, it would not only facilitate the societal marginalization but also make it easy for extremist ideologist to exploit and recruit students from university's campuses.
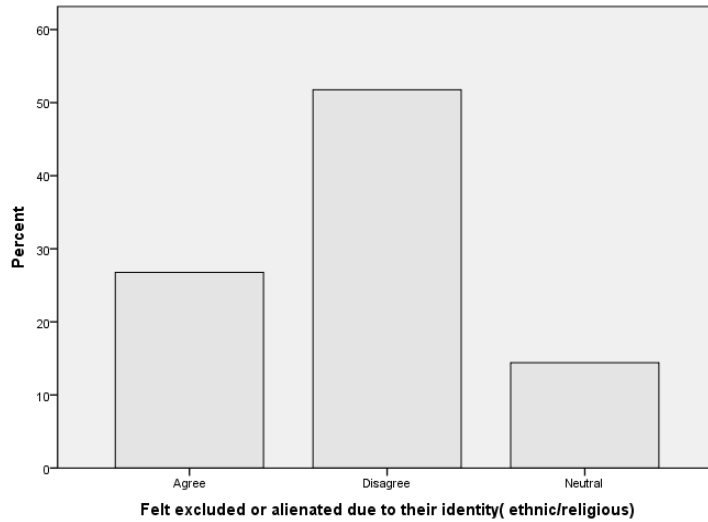
Figure 6.4: Students Felt Excluded or Alienated due to their Identity (Ethic/Religious)

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.1.5 Recruitment and Affiliation of Students with Extremist Groups

A number of investigations have demonstrated that most of the terrorists in the current times are university graduates with most of them belonging to the natural sciences field from renowned universities (Gambetta and Hertog 2016). The trend of recruitment from universities has increased and there has been an acknowledgment of the undeniable fact that violent extremist organizations don't always need a labor force, sometimes they seek experts with higher education and skill sets according to their needs and goals, and academic setting like universities provide the best opportunity for such organization to do so (Bloom 2016).

Building on this case, the researcher tried to seek an answer whether the students from QAU and IIUI ever faced such kind of situation where one of their friends or acquaintances was recruited or joined such an organization. 42 students from IIUI and 65 students from QAU knew someone who had joined an extremist organization. By calculating the ratios, we can distinguish between the recruitment rates in both universities.

$$R_{QAU} = \frac{Number\ of\ student\ who\ knew\ someone\ who\ joined\ extremist\ group}{total\ number\ of\ student\ surveyed} = \frac{65}{200} = 0.325$$

$$R_{IIUI} = \frac{Number\ of\ student\ who\ knew\ someone\ who\ joined\ extremist\ group}{total\ number\ of\ student\ surveyed} = \frac{42}{140} = 0.3$$

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As both the ratios are almost the same, it shows that the level of recruitment is almost the same in these universities. However, the nature can be different of extremist groups as in QAU, there is a more dominant presence of ethnic extremist groups while in IIUI there are predominantly religious extremist groups present (Ahmed and Jafri 2022).

Table 6.2: *Crosstabulation of Universities with the Variable of Knowing A Student Who Joined An Extremist Group*

Crosstabulation							
Count							
		Known a student of their university who joined an extremist group					**Total**
		Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Neutral*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*	
University of the respondent	*QAU*	20	45	32	58	45	200
	IIUI	12	30	18	46	34	140
Total		32	75	50	104	79	340

Note: QAU= Quaid-e-Azam University, IIUI= International Islamic University Islamabad

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.2 Section 2: Exploring the relationship between Dependent and Independent Variables

This section provides the descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables, and the relationship between the variables. It would aim to look into the hypothesis created by the researcher and analyze them through regression model.

6.2.1 Descriptive Understanding of Dependent and Independent Variables

The subsequent table provides a detailed overview of all the variables including the dependent and independent. While studying a concept and verifying the hypothesis, it is more reasonable and logical to combine the variables and formulate a new index variable based on different indicators which is reflecting the underlying concept (Bryman and Cramer 2005). Using this approach, the researcher has combined the different indicators such as sense of alienation, hate speech, number of violent clashes etc. to gauge upon the exposure of students to the phenomenon of extremism which is the dependent variable. Additionally other indicators were combined to form two more independent variables including key drivers and countermeasures.

These indexed variables would further be utilized to test the hypothesis. Given below are the detailed indicators which are combined together to form three new indexed variables.

Table 6.3: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Dependent and Independent Variables*

V	M	Std. Dev
Extre_Indexed	**34.41**	**5.35**
Think of a person as an extremist if they use violent to support their opinions	2.35	1.069
Think extremism is a growing issue in the universities	2.11	.912
Felt excluded or alienated from the society due to their identity(ethnic/religious)	2.04	.885
Current Syllabi taught in universities promote tolerance and harmony among from different background (religious/ethnic)	2.91	1.139
Have witnessed violent clashes in their university	2.92	1.408
Have taken part in violent clashes	1.99	.410
Consider these clashes to be manifestation of extremism	2.25	.978
Everyone's opinions are respected in their university without any intolerant behaviour	2.77	1.119
Have been exposed to hate speech and discrimination due to their identity (ethnic/religious) in university	3.09	1.275
Known a student of their university who joined an extremist group	3.36	1.306
Believe fighting for one's right even if it leads one to use violence is acceptable	3.12	1.242
Drivers_indexed	**10.74**	**3.41**
Bad governance and social marginalization lead to extremism within the society and universities	1.69	.842
Believe that inter-group dynamics (rivalry and power struggle) causes extremism in my university	2.20	.987
Consider biased religious teaching playing a role in causing extremism in my university	2.14	1.182
Consider pressure groups (religious and political) influence in universities causes violent clashes	2.14	1.131
Consider traditional methods of teaching without an emphasizes on instilling critical thinking make student vulnerable to extremist ideologies in universities	2.57	1.238
CM_indexed	**8.93**	**2.21**
Believe my university has taken adequate measures to stop any kind of extremism activity from happening on campus	2.79	1.134
Consider emancipation of marginalized groups as a solution to mitigating the issue of extremism in the university	2.13	.861
Consider instilling critical thinking among the students as a solution to the phenomenon of extremism in the universities	2.02	.872
Consider teaching conflict resolution skills in universities can mitigate the phenomenon of extremism	2.00	.877

Note: V=variables, M=Mean, std. dev= Standard Deviation, Extreme= extremism, Drivers= Factors driving Extremism, CM= Counter Measures

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.2.3 Analyzing the Primary Drivers of Extremism in Universities Through Regression Model

The null and alternate hypothesis for simple linear regression for drivers of extremism is as follows:

H_o = There exists no significant relationship between the phenomenon of extremism and its drivers (bad governance, social marginalization, identity dynamics, biased religious teaching, traditional method of teaching).

H_1 = There exists a significant relationship between the phenomenon of extremism and its drivers (bad governance, social marginalization, identity dynamics, biased religious teaching, traditional method of teaching).

The regression results show that the value of adjusted R square is .158 which means that the variance of 15.8 % in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable in the population. Additionally, the p-value is .0 which shows that the regression model is statistically significant and this is enough evidence required to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the drivers mentioned by the researcher do bring about a change in the phenomenon. The lower variance level further indicates that there are other various other variables too through which variance in the dependent variable can be explained. Furthermore, at a confidence interval of 95%, the upper and lower are .77 and .47 respectively which indicates that the effect of independent variables on dependent variables lies between 0.7 and 0.4 units with a confidence level of 95% and as both the values are positive, it shows a directly proportional relationship.

Table 6.4: *Regression Models Showing Relationship between Extremism and Driving Factors*

Model Summary									
Mo	*R*	*R Sq*	*Adjusted R Sq*	*Std. Error*	CS				
					R Squ Chng	*F Chng*	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig. F Chng*
1	.398 a	.158	.156	4.92453	.158	63.496	1	338	.000

a . Predictors: (Constant), Driving Factors

ANOVAᵃ						
Mo		*S Sq*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	*Regression*	1539.847	1	1539.847	63.496	.000ᵇ
	Residual	8196.847	338	24.251		
	Total	9736.694	339			

a. Dependent Variable: Extremism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Driving Factors

Coefficientsᵃ								
M		*Unstd. C*		*Std. C*	*t*	*Sig.*	*95.0% CI*	
		B	*Std. E*	*Beta*			*LB*	*UB*
1	*(Constant)*	27.721	.882		31.435	.000	25.986	29.455
	Driving Factors	.623	.078	.398	7.968	.000	.470	.777

a. Dependent Variable: Extremism

Note: R= Regression, Std.=Standard, Mo= Model, S Sq= Sum of Squares, df= Difference in frequency, CS=Change statistics, M Sq= Mean square, B=Beta, CI=Confidence Interval, LB=Lower Bound, UB=Upper Bound, Chng= Change, Sig= Significance, Unstd. C= Unstandardized Change.

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.2.3 Analyzing the Counter Measures of Extremism in Universities Through Regression Model

The null and alternate hypothesis for simple linear regression for countermeasures is as follows:

H_{o} = There exists no significant relationship between the phenomenon of extremism and its counter measures (instillation of critical thinking, teaching conflict resolution skills, individual emancipation).

H_{1} = There exists a significant relationship between the phenomenon of extremism and its counter measures (instillation of critical thinking, teaching conflict resolution skills, individual emancipation).

The regression results shows that the value of adjusted R square is .019 which means that the variance of 1.9 % in dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable in the population. Along with it, the p-value is .01 which shows that the regression model is statistically significant and this is enough evidence required to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the countermeasures mentioned by the researcher to mitigate the level of extremism in universities have a significant role and by employing them extremism can be mitigated in the universities. The lower variance level further indicates that the countermeasures included are not enough. However, more research can be performed to analyze the role of other countermeasures which could further help in mitigating the phenomenon of extremism.

Table 6.5: *Regression Models Showing Relationship between Extremism and Driving Factors*

Model Summary									
Mo	**R**	**R Sq**	**Adjusted R Sq**	**Std. Error**	**C S**				
					R Sq Change	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig. F**
1	.138[a]	.019	.016	5.31578	.019	6.570	1	338	.011
a. Predictors: (Constant), Countering Measures									

ANOVA[a]						
Mo		**S Sq**	**df**	**M sq**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	*Regression*	185.659	1	185.659	6.570	.011[b]
	Residual	9551.035	338	28.258		
	Total	9736.694	339			
a. Dependent Variable: Extremism						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Countering Measures						

Coefficients[a]								
Mo		**Unstad. C**		**Std C**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95.0% CI**	
		B	**Std. E**	**Beta**			**LB**	**UB**
1	*(Constant)*	31.432	1.200		26.193	.000	29.071	33.792
	Countering Measures	.334	.130	.138	2.563	.011	.078	.590
a. Dependent Variable: Extremism								

Note: R= Regression, Std.=Standard, E=Error, Mo= Model, S Sq= Sum of Squares, df= Difference in frequency, CS=Change statistics, M Sq= Mean square, B=Beta, CI=Confidence Interval, LB=Lower Bound, UB=Upper Bound, Chng= Change, Sig= Significance, Unstd. C= Unstandardized Change.

Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.3   Section 3: Investigating the Difference in Exposure of Phenomenon of Extremism at QAU and IIUI through Independent T-test

As the researcher has taken the case studies of QAU and IIUI, this section would inculcate a t-test that would reveal the difference in the level of extremism in both these universities. The independent t-test is used to determine whether the mean of two unrelated samples differ (Bryman 2005). By investigating the significance of the difference of the samples, in our case QAU and IIUI, we can determine whether the trends of exposure to extremism are the same or higher in one of the universities.

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6.3.1 **Comparative Analysis of QAU and IIUI**

As mentioned above, the t-test was utilized to determine the significance of the difference between both sample areas. The table below shows the statistics and, the number of QAU students is 30% higher than those of IIUI students. The mean of QAU is 33.3 while IIUI has a 35.9 mean which indicates that the variable of indexed extremism which is based upon different indicators of presence and exposure to the phenomenon of extremism is higher in IIUI than in QAU even though the sample is greater of QAU. Plus, the mean difference is significant which can be observed by looking at the two-tailed p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Overall, this test implies that indeed there is a significant difference in the exposure to extremism encountered by the students of QAU and IIUI. Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval with - 3.6 lower and -1.4 upper bound reflects that the mean value lies between these two points. The negative sign further reinforces the finding that Group 2 which is IIUI has a higher mean than Group 1; QAU.

Table 6.6: *Independent T-tests for Comparative Analysis of QAU and IIUI*

Group Statistics					
	University of the respondent	*N*	*M*	*Std. Dev*	*Std. E M*
Extremism	*QAU*	*200*	*33.3650*	*5.26597*	*.37236*
	IIUI	*140*	*35.9214*	*5.14546*	*.43487*

Independent Samples Test								
		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*M Dif*	*Std. E Dif*	95% CI	
							LB	**UB**
Extremism	**Equal variances assumed**	-4.44	338	.000	-2.55	.57	-3.68	-1.42
	Equal variances not assumed	-4.46	303.56	.000	-2.55	.57	-3.68	-1.42

Note: QAU= Quaid-e-Azam University, IIUI= International Islamic University Islamabad, N= Numbers, M=Mean, Std. Dev= Standard Deviation, Std. E M+ Standard Error Mean, df=Difference in frequency, Sig= Significance, M diff= Mean Difference, CI=Confidence Interval, LB=Lower Bound, UP=Upper Bound.   Source: (Data Analysis based on SPSS)

6.4   Conclusion

By employing different techniques and models, the researcher provided a condensed dataset of around 340 sample sizes and its interpretation. To conclude, the data did indicate that the phenomenon of extremism is affecting the academic life of university campuses where the students from both the universities QAU and IIUI are seen to be involved in violent clashes and extremist ideologies. In addition, factors such as bad governance, social marginalization, the role of pressure groups, identity dynamics, biased religious teaching, and traditional methods of teaching are significantly leading to the phenomenon of extremism in both these universities. Robust countermeasures are the need of the hour to mitigate these factors and to control the rise of extremism. Some of the countermeasures put forward by researchers including the instillation of critical thinking, teaching conflict resolution skills, and individual emancipation (giving voice to individuals from different backgrounds) are found to be significant to be included in the policy framework to reduce the aggravating levels of extremism in universities of Pakistan. Lastly, the comparison between the two case studies shows that the students of IIUI are more exposed to the phenomenon than the students of QAU. It indicates that though both universities are in dire need of a counter-campus extremism policy framework IIUI requires immediate response, as the level of extremism is higher than QAU.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1   Discussion

Based on the analysis drawn from the pre-existing literature, this thesis aimed to unveil the growing extremism among the university students of Pakistan. In addition, it formulated two hypotheses to test whether the key drivers mentioned in the pre-existing literature are leading to extremism in two universities of Islamabad (QAU and IIUI) or not, and whether the adaptation of the critical peace education model based on values of critical thinking, conflict resolution skills and emancipation of marginalized groups be enough to counter extremism in universities.

The primary purpose of this thesis was to further elaborate on the work of scholars who have done an in-depth study of extremism among youth in Pakistan. Given that, extremism does exist among youth in Pakistan, does that mean it is also present in educational institutions such as universities?, is it growing or not and in what form is it being manifesting? In addition to it, if it is present what are its primary drivers? And what could be possible countermeasures opted to counter this phenomenon in the universities. This thesis aims to provide answers to these questions.

Furthermore, it also expands its scope of looking into the phenomenon of extremism by looking into the relationship that peace education can play in order to mitigate this phenomenon in universities. Peace education can be used as a significant tool to mitigate aggravating extremism and bring peace to society. Hence the elements of peace education such as values of tolerance, critical thinking, conflict resolution skills, etc. were also explored which also highlighted the scope of peace education in counter-extremism measures.

In the beginning, the thesis made use of pre-existing literature to identify the trends of youth extremism focusing on the case of universities. Scholars around the globe strongly believe that extremism in universities is a mounting issue faced by the states and has been included in the counter-extremism measures of many states. Bringing this school of thought to the case of

Pakistan, this thesis further revealed the trends of extremism in the youth of Pakistan especially those who are enrolled in universities. It was revealed that post 9/11, the focus of counter-violent extremism measures remained on madrassahs but observing the augmentation in cases of active recruitment from universities, the attention was brought to countering extremism in universities. The literature showed an upward trend of extremism among youth and most of the active recruitment and violent clashes happened in be post-2010 period. During 2015-2019, there was a sharp rise in such incidents however, there were no such incidents during the two years from 2020-2021. One of the reasons might be the COVID-19 lockdown where all the universities were operating online and there was no in-person contact between the students. Again in 2022 and 2023, there were violent clashes among students of different groups within universities as mentioned in the literature review. The qualitative data also points toward a rise in the susceptibility of university students towards extremist ideas. The themes reflected the rising phenomenon of extremism among students where they had become intolerant and non-accommodative towards others.

Another interesting point to reflect upon is that most of these violent clashes observed are between two different ethnic or religious groups on a minor issue. This further reflects the phenomenon of social fusion happening across universities where students are ready to resort to violence to protect what they believe to be the interests of the group. The groups present in universities further intensify this phenomenon that's why we observe more extremism in universities with different pressure groups present such as QAU and IIUI. It also further solidifies the research of Zahid and Jafri (2020) where they collected empirical evidence from these two universities.

This was also indicated in the themes obtained by doing thematic data analysis of qualitative data. It was identified that a sense of exclusiveness and negation of differences was prevalent among the students at universities. These themes further reflect the definition of extremism undertaken by the researcher where the students in universities are at the extreme level of social fusion and think of the out-group as a threat to their survival. Furthermore, it was also observed in the data gathered by surveys where 26.8% out of the sample of 340 students felt excluded and alienated from others in their university. Along with it, a total of 24.4% faced hate speech and discrimination due to their identity (ethnic/ religious).

A number of primary drivers of extremism among students in universities were also identified through analysis of pre-existing literature. A few of them that were found to be frequent in literature were political instability and social marginalization among groups, identity dynamics and power struggles, the presence of political and religious groups, and biased religious teaching. Lastly, lack of critical thinking capabilities among students. Now to verify whether there is a relationship between these drivers and extremism in university, a survey was formulated and administrated in QAU and IIUI. The regression analysis which is done to determine the relationship between different variables showed that there exists a positive inverse relationship between these key drivers and extremism. The more presence of these factors was observed in the universities, the more students were exposed to the phenomenon of extremism. Apart from these factors, numerous more key factors were also identified through thematic analysis of qualitative data. The us vs them mentality or identity crisis was identified to be causing extremism among students. This again verifies the argument that identity dynamics are playing a major role in causing extremism. On one hand, social identity theory can help us understand this formation of in-group and out-group categorization while on the other hand, social fusion theory helps us understand the fact that the students in our universities get so much attached to the group they belong to that the distinction between their own identity and group identity belongs blurred. Hence, their group's problems become their individual level problem and vice versa.

Lastly, a number of elements of peace education programs such as giving training in conflict resolution skills to students, individual emancipation, instilling critical thinking among students, and respect for others were analyzed in the pre-existing literature as a means to counter extremism. To further verify this, there was found to be a positive relationship between countermeasures undertaken in light of peace education and extremism through regression analysis of quantitative data. The p-value obtained was 0.01 showing a statistically significant relationship. Furthermore, other countermeasures which can be taken were also identified through the qualitative data themes. Such as the spaces for open debates which would then reduce the extreme affiliation of students with their groups and would give them space to understand the differences between groups. Another important aspect is building the capacity of both teachers and students. It is important to note that in many universities' problems identified are due to the faculty members. Hence, it is important not just to build the capacity building of students but also of the teachers.

7.2 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, as an answer to the research questions, it can be said that there exists a trend of rising extremism among the students at universities of Pakistan with the understanding of identity dynamics at play. The students are observed to be lacking the capacity for critical thinking and accepting differences which is leading them to be locked in a closed box of groups seeing the world through a narrow lens. This mindset is causing them to be manipulated by extremist groups, and are often recruited by such organizations. Hence, the state of Pakistan needs to realize the need for quick action to counter extremism in universities as its population is growing and if nothing, these brilliant minds of youth will be used by manipulative violent extremist organizations to run their errands. In regards to it, peace education could be used as a tool to mitigate this issue as many other states are also utilizing this. Only when this is controlled and countered, the state of Pakistan can embark on the road to prosperity or else such a huge educated population of Pakistan with an extremist mindset would prove fatal to the security of the state in coming times.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONAIRE

Preventing Extremism in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan through Peace Education

<u>**Survey**</u>

The survey aims to study and analyze the phenomenon of extremism in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan. The data gathered through this survey will be solely used for research purpose and confidentiality will be ensured by the researcher. The researcher is highly grateful for your response and insights.

Name: _____ **(Optional)**
Gender : M /F
Age : _____
University_____
Department: _____**(Optional)**

Part 1   **Phenomenon of Extremism**

Q. Circle or Tick one of the given options.

1. Are you aware of the terminology of extremism?

    1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

2.   Do you think extremism is a problem in the state of Pakistan?

    1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

3.   I consider extremism and terrorism as same terminologies

    1. Yes   2. No   3. Maybe

4.   I consider a person extremist, if he/she resorts to violence to support their opinions?

    1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

5.   Do you think extremism is a growing issue in the Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan?

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

6.   Have you ever felt being alienated or excluded from the society due to your identity(ethnic/religious)?

     1. Yes   2. No   3. Maybe

7.   Do you think the current syllabi being taught in universities promotes tolerance and harmony among people of different religious and ethnic background?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

8.   Have you witnessed any cases of violent clashes in your university?

     1. Very Often   2. Often   3. Occasionally

4. Rarely   5. Never

9.   If yes, then have you ever part taken in such clashes?

     1. Yes   2. No   3. Maybe

10.   I consider these clashes to be a form of extremism?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

11.   Everyone's opinions are respected without any intolerant behaviour in my university?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

12. I have been exposed to hate speech and discrimination due to my identity (ethnic/religious)?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

13.   I have known a student of my university who joined an extremist group?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

14.   I believe fighting for one's right even if it means resorting to violence is acceptable?

     1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

Part 2   **Driving Factors of Extremism**

Select the correct numeric response to each question. 1. Strongly Agree / 2- Agree /3- Neutral /4- Disagree /5- Strongly Disagree					
Q.1 . Political factors and social factors such as bad governance and marginalization leads to the phenomenon of extremism within the society	1	2	3	4	5
Q.2. I believe the intergroup dynamics(ethnic/religious) do play a role in causing extremism	1	2	3	4	5
Q.3. I consider biased religious teaching playing a major role in causing extremism	1	2	3	4	5
Q.4. There is a strong influence of political and religious parties in universities which end up causing violent clashes	1	2	3	4	5
Q.5 Traditional methods of teaching are emphasized in my university without instilling critical thinking making students vulnerable to extremist ideologies	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3:   **Countering Extremism Through Peace Education**

Q. Circle or Tick one of the given options

1. I believe that my university has taken adequate measure to stop any kind of extremist activity from happening again.

2.   Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

2. I consider giving voices to the marginalized group as a solution to reducing the problem   of extremism.

   1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

3.If critical thinking is instilled in the students through the means of peace education , it can mitigate the phenomenon of extremism in universities.

1.   Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

4. Conflict resolution skills taught in Higher Education Institutions can help in mitigating the phenomenon of extremism.

1.   Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Neutral

4. Disagree   5. Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B

PLAGIARISM REPORT

DUA KHAN THESIS(EXTREMISM).docx

3%	3%	1%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1 dvc-ril.mksu.ac.ke
Internet Source
<1%

2 nation.com.pk
Internet Source
<1%

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Internet Source
<1%

4 www.rsis.edu.sg
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5 core.ac.uk
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6 Gur-Ze'ev. "Peace Education", International Encyclopedia of Education, 2010
Publication
<1%

7 Javed Anwar, Sher Rahmat Khan, Mir Zaman Shah, Seth Brown, Peter Kelly, Scott Phillips. "COVID-19 and the (Broken) Promise of Education for Sustainable Development", Brill, 2023
Publication
<1%