

An Exploration of University Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Towards Peace Education

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Abstract

As a basic need of the humans, peace is always considered a cherished value around the world. That's why the need for a peaceful co-existence is usually felt at personal, interpersonal, group, national, or international level, hence, the establishment of the United Nations. The UN has made it obligatory for all the member states to foster such an education system that may strengthen the value of peaceful co-existence. Out of many ways one is peace education where the importance of universities cannot be overlooked. Therefore, this research was meant to explore the attitudes of university teachers and students. The objectives were: i, to find the level of attitude of university teachers and students related to peace education; ii, to compare the attitude of teachers with students. Questionnaire was used for measuring attitudes of the respondents. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were established through expert opinions, pilot testing and Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.94. Through stage sampling technique data was collected from a total of 770 target respondents. SPSS version 16 was used for analysis. It was found that: i, majority of the respondents possessed positive attitude towards peace education; ii, in comparison to students, teachers had relatively more positive attitude towards peace education. Based on findings, recommendations were made for concerned quarters.

Key Words: peace, peace education, attitudes, co-existence, global citizenship

Introduction

Since the very inception of human society, it has been the basic need of human family to live in peace with others. Peace and war are like the two sides of a coin in any society. However, Man is in a consistent struggle to establish peace even in face of maximized chances of wars and conflicts. That's why international forums such as the UN, some countries, NGOs, and civil societies are exclusively working for peace. Peace can be achieved through a number of ways, the most outstanding being informal and formal modes of peace education. Peace education, in recent decades, has emerged a specialized field of inquiry and is taught in various countries of the world. However, in Pakistan peace education is not taught in in the formal sense, yet the need is gaining momentum due to the ongoing situation in the country. Hence, the researcher felt the need to explore the level of attitudes that university teachers and students possess pertaining to peace education. The problem under consideration was, "exploring university teachers' and students' attitudes towards peace education". Objectives of the

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study were: i, to determine the level of the attitude of teachers and students pertaining to peace education at university level; ii, to compare the extent of attitudes of male and female teachers and students towards peace education; iii, to draw a comparison between the attitudes of teachers with students.

The study is significant as it is alone of its kind in the research arena especially in Pakistan as the study deals with the most important concern of the human family, that is, Peace as well as peace education. This will prove as a welcoming addition for the research community in general and for Pakistani researchers in particular. The study recommended some practicable suggestions for implementation in Pakistan. The study is equally important for teacher educators, educational administrators, and those sitting in the power corridors concerned with policy initiatives for education.

Literature Review

'Peace' is a derivation of the Latin word '*pax*' which stands for agreement to settle down disputes such as war between two antagonistic groups of people (Khemananda, 1996). Peace is, "A situation in which there is no war or violence in an area and the state of living in friendship with somebody", (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 7th Ed.). Peace scholars are of the view that peace is the state of peoples' behavior that promotes harmony, care and love in the way the peoples talk, listen to, and in their interaction; together with discouraging all forms of violent overtures like hurting, destroying other people, (UNESCO, 2001).

Peace education is a vast area. Reardon (1988) explains that there is no precise limit to which peace education can be confined as it is a multi-pronged discipline that includes many areas such as: conflict resolution, non-violence, international understanding, human rights education, social justice, and environmental education. However, despite the threats of war an encouraging aspect is that the need of peace education is felt in nearly all countries of the world. Peace education has attained the status of full-fledged field of study due to its role in addressing many pressing social problems of the modern world especially peace building, conflict resolution, and bringing about harmony and reconciliation (Seitz, 2004).

Peace can either be in negative or positive form. Negatively it is the narrow concept that simply stands for the absence of war, unrest, conflicting situation, or any other form of social unrest, (Burtan, 1990). As against this according to positive meaning, it is not just the absence of war; rather, it refers to absence of apparent and hidden forms of conflict. However, the sources of peace are explicitly mentioned by UNESCO (2001) such as: i, Inner Peace (or peace from within, spiritual peace); ii, Social Peace (living in harmony with other humans); and Peace with Nature (taking care of the physical environment).

Its history starts with Montessori's (1870-1952) '*Casa dei Bambini*', where she introduced the new educational thought and system based on the philosophy of peace. Students' choice of choosing content of their own interest was emphasized. Another towering educationist is Read, (1949) who favored the integration of art and education in such a way to provide an image-based education system the motto of which is peace-promoting behaviors. Despite its first ever inception as an academic field of study in 1948 at Manchester College Indiana, USA, the program pioneer, Galtung expounded the concept of positive and negative peace, making it a specialized discipline in the 1960s (Harris, 2002). Afterwards, peace researchers like, Paulo Freire's peace philosophy reflected in his work '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*', contributed to the field. He suggested peace-promoting methodology in the educative process and expounded the idea of structural violence that can be addressed through proper education. With the latest contribution of Brock-Utne, Reardon, and Harris, peace education entered into a new era where the dangers of nuclear warfare remained the focus of debate in their works. They exerted lasting influence on peace studies.

The prime objective of peace education is to inculcate peace-promoting attitudes among the learners. For such attitude formation, Nakamura considers the following aspects to be cared of: peaceful coexistence from personal to international level, respect for environment and life, respect for diversity, and forbearance, (Nakamura, n.d). This is pertinent to mention here that enhancing someone's knowledge about peace may not necessarily improve the attitudes as well as Samhall shunskap Och Samhalssyn (cited by Brock-Utne) explored secondary school students' attitudes regarding certain social issues and their understanding about the same where no significant correlation was found between the respondents' knowledge and their attitudes. Similar findings were reported by Leming (1999) in his study. Contrary to this, other Peace researchers found positive impact on the attitudes of the trainee in peace training programs, e.g. Smith (1999). Leming's point of view is supported by Salomon, (2004) as well.

The United Nations proposed for her member-states to start peace education programs in their respective systems of educations, however, many countries are yet to start, Pakistan is one of them. In Pakistan some educational institutions have started peace education programs such as: the Grammar School System (Rawalpindi) that is preparing various text books, and other peace-promoting materials. Such peace education initiatives are also taken by certain NGOs as well. A few names are: SAHE, *Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi*, and Simorgh. In Pakistan, education system has two main linages: the state sponsored institutions and the Madrassa education system. Despite the benefits of the system, it has given way to produce such types of individuals that are indoctrinated in a totally different rather antagonistic manner. Due

to poverty, usually, poor people send their children to Madrassas. Ahmed (2007) opines that due to poverty, *madrassa* is the only option left for the poor. These *madrassas* are in a miserable condition with reference to curricula, teaching methodology and other related facilities, together with teacher training issue. For these institutions, USIP arranged a training program based on the philosophy of peace education during 2007, in Islamabad, Srinivasan (2009). Srinivasan believes that despite numerous hurdles peace education initiatives are increasing day by day in Pakistan where the focus is on curriculum and teacher-training.

To sum up, peace is the primary need of humanity. Peace is a condition of tranquility, serenity and non-violence. Pioneers of peace education are: Comenius, Kant, Montessori, Galtung, Freire, Brocke-Utne, Reardon and Harris. Peace education strives to establish a durable peace on the globe. It encompasses human rights, environment, conflict-resolution and international understanding. Peace education can be an effective tool when properly designed, and implemented through effective curriculum, methodology coupled with a peaceful environment. Peace education is more a matter of attitudes, though knowledge and skill are also the integral components for optimum results. In view of this global context, Pakistan is lagging behind to incorporate peace education in the system. Presently a few institutions and some NGOs have taken strides in this direction. The education system in Pakistan needs to be updated as per UN prerogatives, so that the citizens may live with peace for themselves, with others and with Nature.

Methodology

All teachers and students of universities (both public and private) in Pakistan constituted the population. At the time of data collection there were 113 universities in total. Out of the total population, 11 universities were randomly selected representing 10% of the population. Data was collected from universities in: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Punjab, Northern Areas, and the Federal Area. Total respondents were 719 covering 210 male and female teachers, and 509 students (both genders). A valid and reliable, questionnaire (with .94 Cronbach Alpha) duly pilot tested as well as improved through judgmental procedure earlier, was administered to the respondents. From each university 70 respondents (teachers 20; 10 male and 10 female), together with 50 student respondents (25 male and female each) were investigated. There were two separate questionnaires for teachers and students, however, the items of the research instruments were exactly the same for teachers and students except for their relative position in the teaching-learning process. There were a total of 23 statements consisting of: perceptions (05 statements), content (04 statements), methodology (04 statements) and practicing peace (10 statements).

For attitude towards peace education, Likert type scale was adopted. A total of 23 statements dealing with attitude factor were there in the questionnaire. These statements were meant for measuring attitudes towards peace education. Statistics like: percentages mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA and Post-Hoc tests were used in the process of analysis.

Analysis

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted in line with the latest statistical methods. The detail is given below.

Table 1: Comparison of teachers and students in perceptions related to attitude towards peace education

Respondent Type	N	Mean Score	SD	t	P
Teachers	210	18.56	4.73	.897	.371
Students	509	18.21	4.79		

* level of significance 0.05

Table 1 presents a comparison of teachers and students pertaining to their perceptions about attitude towards peace education. The statistics (mean scores 18.56 and 18.21 and standard deviations 4.73 and 4.79 for teachers and students respectively with a t-value of .897) given in the table indicate that both types of respondents possess positive attitude. The value of p is .371 > 0.05, indicates that there was no significant difference in the responses of the comparison groups.

Table 2: Gender-based comparison in perceptions related to attitude towards peace education

Respondent Type	N	Mean Score	SD	t	P
Male	361	18.69	4.79	2.148	.032*
Female	358	17.93	4.73		

* level of significance 0.05

Table 2 compares male and female regarding their perceptions pertaining to attitudes towards peace education. The statistics (mean scores 18.69 and 17.93 and standard deviations 4.79 and 4.73 for male and female respectively with a t-value of 2.148) given in the table indicate that both types of respondents possess positive attitudes towards peace education. The value of p is $.032 < 0.05$, indicates that there is significant difference in the responses of the comparison groups. Male respondents possessed relatively more positive attitude towards peace education as compared to female respondents.

Table 3: ANOVA, comparison of mean score of respondents regarding perceptions related to attitude towards Peace Education

Respondent Type	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean sq	F	P
Between Group	125.729	3	41.910	1.847	.137
Within Group	16220.106	715	22.685		
Total	16345.836	718			

* level of significance 0.05

Table 3 reveals comparative significance regarding perceptions related to attitude towards peace education. There was no significant difference in the responses of teachers/students and male/female respondents. The statistical values ($f = 1.847$ and $p = .137$) reveal that there was no significant difference in the mean score of responses of the groups under comparison.

Table 4: Teachers and students comparison in total attitude towards peace education

Respondent type	N	Mean Score	SD	t	P
Teachers	210	82.70	19.23	1.681	.094
Students	509	80.00	20.36		

* level of significance 0.05

Table 4 compares teachers and students regarding their overall attitude on the whole factor of attitude towards peace education. The statistical data (mean scores 82.70 and 80.00; standard deviations 19.23 and 20.36 for teachers and students respectively with t-value being 1.681) show that on the whole teachers were relatively more aware about these concepts as compared to students. However, both types of respondents possess positive attitudes on this factor. The value of p

(.094) is greater than 0.05, thus indicates no significant difference in the response of the comparison groups.

Table 5: *Gender-based comparison in total attitude towards peace education*

Respondent Type	N	Mean Score	SD	T	P
Male	361	82.00	20.59	1.630	.104
Female	358	79.57	19.47		

* level of significance 0.05

Table 5 show a comparison of male and female respondents regarding their overall attitude on the whole factor of attitudes towards peace education. The statistical data (mean scores 82.00 and 79.57; standard deviations 20.59 and 19.47 for teachers and students respectively with t-value being 1.630) show that both types of respondents possess positive attitudes towards peace education on this factor. However, on the whole male respondents were relatively (but not significantly) more aware about these concepts as compared to female respondents. The value of p (.104) is higher than 0.05, thus indicates no significant difference in the response of the comparison groups.

Table 6: *ANOVA gender wise comparison of mean score of respondents*

respondent type	sum of squares	Df	Mean sq	F	P
Between Groups	2154.377	3	718.126	1.790	.148
Within Group	286862.911	715	401.207		
Total	289017.288	718			

* level of significance 0.05

Table 6 is about significance of total attitude towards peace education. It indicates significant difference in the responses of teachers/students and male/female respondents. The statistical values ($f = 1.7900$ and $p = .148$) reveal that there was no significant difference in the mean score of responses of comparative groups.

Findings

- i. Male respondents had relatively more positive attitudes about peace education in comparison to female respondents.
- ii. There was significant difference between mean attitude score of male teachers and female students, female teachers and female students, because $p < 0.05$.
- iii. In case of other comparison groups such as: male teachers and female teachers, male teachers and male students, female teachers and male students, male students and female students,) no significant difference was found ($p > 0.05$).
- iv. On the whole, all the respondents possessed positive attitude.
- v. On the whole teachers had relatively more positive attitude as compared to students with mean scores being 82.70 and 80.00 respectively.

- vi. On the whole male respondents possessed relatively more positive attitudes as compared to female respondents with mean scores being 82.00 and 79.57 respectively.
- vii. Overall, there was no significant difference in the mean score of responses of comparative groups on the attitude factor.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore, “university teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards peace education” where the level of the attitude of teachers and students was to be determined and to compare the extent of attitudes of male and female respondents together with drawing a comparison between the attitude of teachers with students. The analysis of data revealed that majority of the respondents possessed positive attitude. Strange enough, in comparison to female respondents, male respondents had more positive attitude towards peace education. Furthermore, female students were inferior to every comparison-group in attitude towards peace education. When compared with students, teachers had relatively more positive attitude. Such findings are unique in the sense that as peace education is an emerging discipline hence little work is there on attitude comparisons among teachers and students at university level. However, Samhall shunskap och Samhalssyn (1976) cited by Brock-Utne (1998) investigated into the attitude of secondary school students about some social questions and knowledge about those questions where no significant correlation was found between the knowledge levels with the attitudes. Similar findings were shared by Leming (1999) who explored the ratio between knowledge and behavioral outcomes where no clear relationship between increased knowledge and changes in attitude was found. While contrary to this, Smith, (1999) and Salomon, (2004), on the basis of their studies, believe that there is a positive impact of peace training programs on the attitude of individuals (Smith, 1999; Salomon, 2004).

Conclusion

It was concluded that overall the respondents possessed positive attitude towards peace education. There was no significant difference among the responses of the respondents. However, in the comparison group of teachers and students, the former possessed high level as compared to the later. The former’s superiority may be due to the peculiar institutional academic environment as Boulding (1988) thinks that the obstacle in knowing is not a matter of our mind but our minds are shaped and framed inside the social structures of institutions where roles and patterns are developed for succeeding generations. In this respect Finley (2004) emphasizes the role of universities where the prevalent culture is replete with lack of peaceful social constructs because universities have authoritarian teaching methods coupled with an autocratic learning environment.

Recommendations

- i. The system of education may be made peace education oriented.
- ii. Attitudes-formation may be emphasized in the academia.
- iii. In every province of Pakistan, at least, one peace education center or university be established.
- iv. An Action Plan (2030) may be started so as to universalize peace education.
- v. Peace education may be incorporated in the education system.
- vi. Training programs for teachers and students may be launched.
- vii. Teaching-learning materials on peace education may be developed and duly intimated to educational institutions.
- viii. Peace-promoting NGOs may be facilitated.
- ix. Peace scholars and researchers may be facilitated.

For further Research: The same phenomenon may be explored in *Madrassa* Institutions in this respect.

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