PAKISTAN:
Enticing factors of Youth Extremism
in Higher Educational Institutions

Muhammad ATIF

Babak MAHMOOD

Muhammad FAROOQ

Ayesha CHAUDHARY

Abstract: Extremism in universities is not a new phenomenon in the contemporary educational system. This study was conducted to explore the student mindset on extremism in higher educational institutions in Pakistan. In the HEIs, different groups are showing their power and do the extreme act for creating a horrifying and dangerous environment for students and in and outside of the university. The main objective of this study to explore the multiple grounds in higher educational institutions (HEIs) which enticing youth toward extremism. This research is based on secondary data analysis of different archives which are published in different newspapers about these extremist acts in universities. Thematic analysis technique was applied to highlight and discussed the relevant information related to the study objectives and themes. In this study, we found out different themes -ideology, heterogeneity ethnicity, identity, political and religious groups, university faculty and administration - that became the grounds of extremism acts. This study recommended that counter the extremism strategies that the main focus on the amendment in the education policy. Universities could control the activities of extremism in our education system through quality content and pedagogy. Universities should provide an excellent environment and encourage the youth to become tolerant flexible and open-minded.

Keywords: Extremism, youth, Higher Educational Institutions, Explore Factors.

Muhammad ATIF
Department of Sociology
Government College University Faisalabad
E-mail: aatiftabassam@gmail.com

Babak MAHMOOD
Department of Sociology
Government College University Faisalabad

Muhammad FAROOQ
Department of Sociology
Government College University Faisalabad

Ayesha CHAUDHARY
Department of Sociology
Government College University Faisalabad

The term "extremism" is a comprehensively debated term and diverse efforts at its definition have not escaped controversy. Alex Schmid, describe "since extremism is a relational concept, to answer the question: "what is extreme?" one needs a benchmark, something that is (more) "ordinary," "centrist," "mainstream," or "normal" when compared with the (extreme) political fringe. Peter Coleman and Andrea Bartoli (2015) on the other hand, describe extremism as "... activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary".

Extremism is a complex phenomenon, although its complexity is often hard to see. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary. In conflict settings, it manifests as a severe form of conflict engagement. However, the labeling of activities, people, and groups as "extremist" and the definition of what is "ordinary" in any setting is always a subjective and political matter.

In reality, different factors are closely related with each other push factors base on structural and contextual condition (university management and faculty), contribution of personal factors (such as cognitive, depression and self esteem in students) and pull factors (heterogeneity population, ethnic groups, environment, political and religious groups, boosting the students. Scott (2017) admitted that extremism takes place in a social setting and informal social control, where youth join the different groups and network.

Pakistan is a sixth populated country based on multi-religious, multi-lingual society, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. The present education system was not designed and prepared according to globalization and digitalization (Robinson, 2014). Traditional education system produced the supervisors and labor when youth were not able to achieve their goals they become extremist.

Education is a source of knowledge, self-development, analytical thinking and interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. It encompasses a teaching method of students to make a rational approach, sound the interrogative and research skill for finding the results according to goals. The skilled and educated youth is a troublesome situation due to the extremism as this academically strong and technically skilled youth is an asset of a nation (Akers & Silverman, 2004). The educated youth become toys of these extremist group, these groups are busy to ruin the modernity and society. The objective of our universities in creating social flexibility is debatable, but the existence of certain political-religious slogan in the country is a definite reality and is the main grounds to promote extremism in the society. The major challenge for Pakistan is THE presence of political religious parties and their political wings in higher educational institutions. These parties utilize their wings for achieving own objective and construct their identity in universities.

The extreme acts happened in Karachi, being connected with graduate students of a well-known university of Karachi (Rana, 2015). Punjab University and Quaid-a-Azam University are a nursery of extremism activity where ethnic groups are involved to promote the extremism in campuses. These incidents show there are various issues in our educational system that does not neutralize the extreme views of the youth. Top ranking universities, business schools are unable to teach and instill tolerance, acceptability, difference of opinion and freedom of expression. It is a point to consider for our education experts. Similar is the incident in Government College University (GCU) when a female student wearing veil was denied admission. Another extreme incident of Mama Qadeer (a person from a remote area of Pakistan) is not welcoming by The Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). On 13 April 2017 a young 23-year-old student Mashal was murder in the premises of Abdul Walli Khan University Mardan. In Punjab University and Quaid-e-Azam University political religious and ethnic groups fight with each other is a routine matter.

Theoretical framework:

In the social disorganization theory, Shaw and McKay (1972) argue that disorder and delinquency were more familiar in areas of metropolitan with better-concentrated inconvenience, ethnic/ racial heterogeneity, residential and urban areas instability. These factors were more significant because they make feeble social networks in urban areas symbolize by these features, due to this reason the probability of informal social control was minimized. Groves and Sampson (1989) identified the factors of social structure that effects on residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, low economic status and urbanization. Researchers precede the frequency of unofficial and delinquent youth groups, peer groups network density and measure the capability of youth groups to self regulate by factors of informal social control, the direct relation of social structure with crime which explored in the studies of social disorganization. (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

Heterogeneity of population is associated with the factors of social structure. In different studies Community organization and neighborhood directly affect of ethnic heterogeneity and racial communities (Barton & Jensen, 2010). Universities are not based on the local population and a large number of admission links to heterogeneity population that is expected to link by ethnic and racial composition. The youth heterogeneity population in the universities has increased from the last few decades (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

In this study, we apply the social learning theory on the university students; students learn extremism by just observing even if they have not direct connection with extremist. Students observe their behavior, likelihood and awards which were getting attraction through observation. Social learning theory linked to the social behavioral approach that draws attention to the reciprocal link between behavioral environmental and cog-

nitive determinants of social behavior. In the theoretical approach belief, narratives and ideologies are encouraged by the environment then youth intimate extreme act. According to the social learning theory, an individual has own attitudes and values, he knows what is an acceptable behavior or not. They are rational according to the situation, evaluator of the environment, having decision power what is right and wrong, good and bad, their moral attitudes define desirable and undesirable. Individual cognitive, explain constructive to deviance provide a mindset that enticing youth toward extreme act when the opportunity is created and occurred.

The study in hand was qualitative in nature. Secondary information was used to explore the different acts of the extremism in major universities of Pakistan. Thematic analysis technique was applied to probe the events of extremism happening in the different public sectors universities. The researcher goes through with the various archives that highlight the various causes of extremism in higher educational institutions on the bases of study objectives. The whole sampling design for the study is multistage. At the first stage, different universities of Pakistan were selected where the incidence of extremism is reported. At the second stage of sampling procedure, three incidents from Abdul Walli khan University Mardan, University of The Punjab, Lahore, and Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad were selected purposively where political religious and ethnic groups fight with each other is a routine matter. Moreover, a sample of twenty (20) archives from authentic sources that ensures the descriptions of the acts of extremism that enticing youth. Thematic analysis technique was applied to highlight and discuss the relevant information related to the study objectives and variables.

Sr No	Variables	AWKUM (Mashal Murder Case)	PU Lahore (two group fighting)	QUI (two ethnic groups fight)
1	Ideological clash	✓	✓	✓
2	Ethnic heterogeneity	✓	✓	✓
3	Identity	✓	✓	✓
4	Behavior,	✓	✓	✓
5	University Teaching faculty role	☒	✓	✓
6	University Administration role	✓	✓	✓
7	Blasphemy	✓	☒	☒
8	Political involvement	✓	✓	✓
9	Religious involvement	✓	✓	✓
10	Environment	✓	✓	✓
11	Curriculum	✓	✓	✓
12	Informal social controls	✓	✓	✓

Commonalities

Among the archives of the Mashal murder case, incidents between two groups of Punjab University Lahore and fighting between two groups in Quaid-a-Azam University Islamabad show extremism practice in universities. The commonalities point out these themes are more important to contribute in university extremism and discussed this one by one.

Students of higher education institutions build up their own ideas and beliefs. They develop their own norms and ideas based on their individuality and social groups. The education system does not support the ideas and values according to social transformation and support the conventional education system. Employees of HEI integrate into immature youth psyche which is the reason of poor knowledge (Mahmood, 2017).

Ideological clashes between Islamia Jamiyat-E-Tuluba (IJT) with all other regional student councils, yet again led to the physical fight. As the members of IJT in a sociology department vigorously grabbed Pakhtoon student (while he was busy in his paper) from his class and was harshly beaten and misbehaved with the teachers too. Stephens (1994) discussed how these different frames of ideologies lead the conflicts and different ideological groups attract the youth for achieving the unequal objective.

There are different variables of society, particularly language, ethnicity, gender, religion and nationality. There are multiple variables that cause conflict and intense situation which is twisted by youth. Heterogeneity ethnicity in universities is linked to religious, political, economic and geographical marginalization. All these differences are factors to justify and identify the act of extremism against students (Baloch, 2018).

Sindhi, Punjabi, Pakhtoon and Balochi students were targeted and beaten by each other, especially conventional ethnic groups, to support their culture and values forcefully and with extreme acts. As a result of these extreme acts, many were critically injured, psychologically distressed and showed poor performance in the study (Mahmood, 2017). All the heterogeneity acts of these ethnic groups have multiple objectives mostly are religious and political in consideration. Some other factors include self-governance, demand for independence, power and respect for every group's identity and culture in the institution. Stevens (2010) had described a group composition base on the ethnic heterogeneity that leads to socio-demographic and economic characteristics of large youth groups. In universities different religious, political and cultural groups cause the conflicts to achieve their own aims and objectives such as support their narrative, authority and access to a resource, etc.

In some Pakistani universities, the leading cause of extremism, militancy and other issues is lack of rules, regulations and supervision, said Ashfaque Hasan Khan, dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Islamabad.

Educational institutes in Pakistan have been found to implement their main purpose of spreading knowledge in society and all of its members and therefore play a vital part in the development and stability of society (Zugri, 2015). The failure of these educational institutes in disseminating knowledge in society can be proved statistically.

The limited physical and extra curriculum activities, restrict the behavior of employees in the universities are another cause of extreme behavior in HEIs. As there is an old saying 'an idle mind is a devil's workshop'. Hence if students in their most creative days in universities are stayed back without doing much around, they can easily be preyed by organized extremist organizations. The limitation in meetings, discussions and events, which could develop a channel for students to discuss their problems anxieties and issues, is making them oppressive and leading them to get solace in an exclusionary and simplistic discussion of extremists (Khan, 2017a). The socio-demographic element in minimizing extremism is allowing the students freedom of speech in campuses which is carefully guarded in universities in the West.

The most terrible thing was the supposed role of some university employees and faculty members in provoking violence in students and that too on trumped-up blasphemy charges. Our only focus on science and technology is the reason of the prevailing narrative of extremist in academia of Pakistan. Although science and technology are essential for monetary capital growth and financial development, the social sciences and humanities are significant for social capital growth. (Amjad, 2012). Human capitals are benefitted and promote prosperity with the help of moral and ethical values. All developed countries make reforms and utilize different modern approaches according to the requirement in the education system. Unluckily Pakistan contains the old approach, no amendments in the curriculum, no faculty training workshops at the university level, suppress analytical skill and not promote the entrepreneurship. The present teaching method enforces the learning material for memorization of the lesson without any practical and comprehensive work and does not build critical and analytical thinking skills.

University administration gives leverage to these groups and not make an effective plan on how to control the extreme action of the students. According to the police officials "security in charge at the university, is the main accused in Khan's murder" (Akber, 2017).

Zeshan Hyder, a student of Punjab University, told *University World News* that students and higher education were suffering because of "rogue students backed by political agendas", Political interference is a big question for authorities. University administrations aren't able to solve critical and emergency issues (Nafees, 2017). Administration Efficiency is very poor and they linger on the issues which create difficulties for students and promote and fulfill the political agenda.

A student lynched in the premises of university by accuse of blasphemy. Mashal was tortured and ruined by students with the involvement of the political and religious

group. According to the police officer video show the hundreds of students participate in that mob and show their anger of blasphemy and university administration involved in this act (Malik, 2018).

Political parties influence the university administration and provide protection to students for their own objective. Anis Ahmed points out that the youths are attracted through different thrills and ruin them for achieving the political objective by prohibited means (Basharat, 2018). Political parties in the universities are associated with the traditional educational environment and system. The improper education system and political interference promote the extremism in the students because the state fails to facilitate integrated education (Kaleem, 2017).

The youth of higher educational institutions is used by political-religious parties to promote their goals and identity. Penetration of religious and political identity and ideology in universities is helpful for achieving their vulnerable and political objective and the existence of JTI in the university of Punjab is a piece of evidence (Zugri, 2015). These groups inject the ideologies in students and promote extreme mind in universities for destabilize the education system and gain the youth power (Hussain, 2017).

It is very dangerous to rising the extremism in the premises of institutions for the universities environment. Amjad (2017) reported that Mashal had criticized the university exam system and poor management of the university on the local TV channel. In universities, different forces promote the suffocating environment and traditional thoughts. Deutsch (2004) discussed the different environmental factors disturbing the society and effects on the socio-economic and behavioral pattern according to the youth conflicts. Universities encourage the sports days, cultural day's freedom of speech, participation in curriculum and extra-curriculum activities, Universities have permitted the traditional teaching and learning environment (Siddiq, 2017).

The educational policy-makers failed to develop curricula that inculcate fundamentally democratic, anti-extremist and tolerant values among the students. The curriculum is designed under the pressure of different international forces for targeting their goals, like Zia ul Haq era promote the religious values and culture that attract the students for jihad then these forces provide the funding to Mushraf Government for The curriculum the modernization and globalization (Wazir, 2018).

University students have their own identity according to their ideology and environment; they join different political and religious groups because these forms are easily available in HEIs. Universities have not provided the opportunists to join the academic platforms that show their skill and promote identity according to their talent (Hasnain, 2017).

David and Bar-Tal (2009) discussed that every young individual has an identity in the community and share the norms, values, belief and ethics by using that powerful tool.

Youth join different groups for identity and promote their culture, norms. Unluckily heterogeneity ethnic population is making a problematic issue for achieving the identity in the campuses.

Discussion

This study identified multiple factors why youth decide to engage in extremist activity. Select religious beliefs values were found to support engagement in extremism. Non-material (status, identity, power, honor and glory) plunder are also found to give the opportunity for joining the different youth groups. University environment and Friends are not only given the opportunity to associate the different political and religious groups and they influence and reinforce the youth to become a part of those groups (Haq, 2017).

Students decide to join the groups and engage themselves in different activities for varied and multiple reasons. Religious values and ideologies were found to underpin to joining the different religious groups like JTI (Jamiat Tulba Islam) in the universities and these groups were found to intensify the youth become involved in extremism (Haider, 2018). Religious ideology is not a necessary precondition for extremism, secular and modernity upbringing had found to involve in extremism activities (Khan, 2017b).

Personal identity could lead to an individual re-evaluation and the individual leaving the vulnerable views and adopt the extreme act from following the close social contact. Informal social control gives the opportunity to develop the negative ideology and beliefs that underpin student identity (Sheikh, 2018). Students who involve in extreme activities are no more expected to suffer from psychological disorder or mental illness than the general population. Political ideology is consistent encouraging factors for involving in extremism. Students may take steps in revenge for injustice or harass acted out on themselves or university fellows.

Students provide different links to influence the heterogeneity ethnic groups and also reinforce and support the student to join these ethnic groups. Through strong bonding between individuals and groups opinions can become extreme and violent. Religious and ethnic groups give an opportunity of space and social setting according to their goals. University provides safe environments where the religious, political and ethnic group can organize, strengthened their bonding, develop their identity according the extreme views.

University administration fails to control the extremism and these extreme acts become a black label on the education sector. University cafés sitting areas and student hostels are predominantly used as getting to gather and plan for extremism activities like Mashal murder case. University faculty reinforce the ideology and identity of the students, they are mirrors the dynamics of a society but unfortunately faculty involved in producing an environment where ruin the identity and promote extreme ideas.

In the findings of the study, it is concluded that extremism is main challenge in the Universities. According to the archives that youth were able to identify forms, informal social groups and factors contributing to HEIs. Informal social control and environment are key to youth becoming involved in different groups. Universities administrations fail to control these institutes, they provide a friendly environment where extreme ideologies can be preached, provide the opportunities to strengthened the bonding and relationship with different groups. The main perceived informal social groups and concerning dynamics that were: political groups, religious groups, ethnic groups, peer groups, manner of disciplining youth in university, faculty having extreme views, exposure to extreme curriculum, and low level of university discipline supervision.

Universities can control the activities of extremism in our education system through quality content and pedagogy. Universities should provide excellent environment and encourage the youth to become tolerant flexible and open-minded. New Curriculum and teaching style should give the opportunity to develop the personality, confidence, opinion sharing and entrepreneurial. Social tolerance, counter-extremism and humanities must be thought in every discipline of universities so that youth become able to think about the reason, ask question and answer critically and creativity. In an increasingly complex world we cannot restrict ourselves to circles populated by those who look and sound like ourselves.

Reference:

1. Akber, A. (2017, April 23). University employee arrested in Mashal lynching case. *Dawn*, p. 11.

2. Akers, R. L., & Silverman, A. (2004). Toward a social searing model of violence and terrorism. In M. A. Zahn, H. H. Brownstein and S. L. Jackson (Eds.), *Violence: From Theory to Research* (pp. 19-35). Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing.

3. Amjad, A. (2012, May 27).Universities reel under rising student lawlessness. *University World News*. Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20120525163210652.

4. Amjad, A. (2017, April 21). University Officials linked to lynching of student. *University World News.* Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20170421134357622.

5. Baloch, B. (2018, January 23). Punjab university turns into battle after clashes between two groups. *Daily Baluchistan Express*, Queeta, Pakistan, p. 03.

6. Barton, M., & Jensen, L. (2010). Social disorganization and the college campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *38*(3), 245-254.

7. Basharat, R. (2018, November 23). Dispute between QAU student groups resolved amid tense situation. *The Nation*, Islamabad (Pakistan), p. 8.

8. Coleman, P., & Bartoli, A. (2015). Addressing Extremism. New York: The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution.

9. David, O., & Bar-Tal, D. (2009). A Sociopsychological Conception of Collective Identity: The Case of National Identity as an Example. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 13(4), 354–379.

10. Deutsch, M. (2004). Oppression and Conflict, ICCCR Working Conference on Interrupting Oppression. Retrieved from http:// www.tc.columbia.edu/icccr/IOSJ%20Papers/ Deutsch_IOSJPaper.pdf.

11. Haider, A. (2018, January 23). PU turns into warzone as IJT Baloch students clash. *The Daily Times*, Punjab (Pakistan), p 7.

12. Hasnain, K. (2017, March 22). 10 hurt in student groups clash at Punjab University. *Dawn* (Pakistan), p. 4.

13. Haq, R. (2017, February 12). Campus Violence Rising in Country. *The Express Tribune* (Pakistan), p. 4.

14. Hussain, Z. (2017, April 19). Silencing Mashal. *Dawn News*, Islamabad (Pakistan), p. 3.

15. Kaleem, M. (2017, October 23). Protesting QAU students threaten further protests. *The Express Tribune* (Pakistan), p. 5.

16. Khan, R. (2017, July 21). Dynamics of ethnic conflicts in Pakistan. *The Express Tribune* (Pakistan) p. 4

17. Khan, Y. (2017, September 19). Extremism in universities. *Daily Times* (Pakistan), p. 4.

18. Mahmood, J. (2017, October 17). Pakistani universities battle on-campus extremism. *Pakistan Asian News*, Islamabad (Pakistan), p. 1.

19. Malik, A. (2018, January 2). People haven't voted Just for Mashal, they've voted against extremism. *Daily Times* (Pakistan), p. 6.

20. Nafees, M. (2017, May 10). University facing extremism. *Daily Times* (Pakistan), p. 5.

21. Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). How college affects students: a third decade of research (vol. 2). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

22. Rana, M. A. (2015, May 21). The extremism debate. *Dawn* (Pakistan), p. 24.

23. Robinson, K. (2014). Changing Education Paradigms. *The RSA*. Retrieved from https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U.

24. Sampson, R. J., & Groves, W. B. (1989). Community structure and crime: Testing social disorganization theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*, 774–802.

25. Schmid, A. (2014). *Violent and non-violent extremism: two sides of the same coin*. ICCT Research Paper. ICCT: The Hague.

26. Scott, A. (2017). Challenges in researching terrorism from the field. *Science* 355(6323), 54-64.

27. Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1972). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

28. Siddiq, H. (2017, May 4). Violent extremism in Pakistan: A failure of public education. *South Asia @ LSE*. Retrieved from https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2017/05/04/violent-extremism-in-pakistan-a-failure-of-public-education/.

29. Sheikh, A. (2018, January 23). Dozens *Injured in Yet Another* PU clash. *The Express Tribe* (Pakistan), p. 4.

30. Stephens, J. (1994). Gender conflict: connecting feminist theory and conflict resolution theory. In A. Taylor and J. B. Miller (Eds.), *Gender and Conflict* (pp. 217-236). Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

31. Stevens, A., Radcliffe, P., & Gladstone, B. (2010). Offender management community scoping of London gang demographics. London: Probation Trust.

32. Wazir, H. (2018, February 1). Clashes in QAU Leave Around 16 Students Injured. *Pakistan Today* (Pakistan), p. 3.

33. Zugri, R. (2015, November 20). An analysis of religious extremism discourse in the media. Tirana: Albanian Media Institute.