



Evaluating and Designing Active Citizenship Education for Youth Resilience to Preventing Violent Extremism at Public Sector General Universities of Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Pakistan have experienced unprecedented on-campus violent extremism. Large-scale research led approach is needed to prevent homegrown violent extremism through transformative active citizenship education at HEIs in Pakistan taking into account that youth under the age of 30 constitutes 63% of the total population of Pakistan. As recognized repeatedly by the UN Security Council, violent extremism poses a significant threat to global peace and stability, with tremendous impact on social cohesion, eroding development progress and hindering future gains. This paper assesses the current state of citizenship education at Higher Education Institutes in Sindh province. The problem, however, is that many countries, including Pakistan, do not give citizenship education the importance it deserves, nor use approaches appropriate to the development of informed and participatory citizenship. (Dean, 2000; Kerr, McCarthy, and Smith 2002; Torney-Purta and Amadeo 1999). Citizenship active citizenship in youth is a social leadership program that promotes intercultural dialogue and social responsibility as key leadership competencies in the 21st century and results in community resilience. For this purpose, institutionalizing active citizenship for developing youth resilience to violent extremism warrants a massive radical reform of the education system to develop critical analysis skills among youth enabling them challenge violent extremist narratives. This is a preventive and initiative-taking strategy to develop active citizenship to be capitalized as glue for social inclusivity, integration and national cohesiveness in Pakistan. Active citizenship encompassing volunteering, democratic engagement, environmental sustainability, community development and reflective thinking is most likely to prevent vulnerability to recruitment of violent extremist organizations.

Keywords: Youth Leadership, Resilience, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)

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Introduction

Background of the Study and Problem Statement

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Pakistan have witnessed a rise in on-campus violent extremism. Large-scale research led approach is needed to prevent homegrown violent extremism through transformative active citizenship education at HEIs in Pakistan taking into account that youth under the age of 25 constitutes 63% of the total population of Pakistan. As recognized repeatedly by the UN Security Council, violent extremism poses a significant threat to global peace and stability, with tremendous impact on social cohesion, eroding development progress and hindering future gains. This research aims to explore the current status of active citizenship education in order to propose integration of active citizenship education in undergraduate level curriculum as contained in United Kingdom HEIs policy and practices GuildHE and National Union of Students (NUS) document; Active Citizenship: the role of Higher Education. Traditionally, Sindh has strong tradition of Sufism and peace but the incidence of violent extremism at Higher Education Institutes Campus are alarming. In view of the ban on Student Unions in Pakistan since 1984, as an alternate strategy, this research will inform institutional level policy making for embedding active citizenship as a core area in university curriculum.

Research Goals & Objectives

- i- To evaluate the current status of co-curricular and extracurricular activities encompassing active citizenship at Higher Education Institutes of Sindh
- ii- To propose institutionalization of Active Citizenship Education as initiative-taking teaching learning approach at undergraduate level for countering violent extremism at HEIs.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is as follows:

- What are the prospects and challenges of active citizenship education for developing youth leadership & resilience countering violent extremism at higher education institutes?



Literature Review

The Sindh Youth Policy 2018, p. 8) according to the Pakistan official standards Pakistan considers young people between 15-29 year of age bracket as youth. As per Pakistan Economic Survey (2014), 68.8 percent population in Pakistan. This demographic transition is expected to rise till 2040. Youth bulge is divided if managed effectively through youth development programs and initiatives. In line with Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security as well as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2018), it is well recognized that enhanced investment in youth development is essential for preventing and countering violent extremism. Youth development as a process focused to prepare young people to counter the challenges of adolescence and adulthood with the purpose of achieving full potential. Youth leadership is a part of the youth development process and supports the young person in developing the set of certain leadership skills necessary to survive and thrive while living a successful life. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2018, p. 12 has highlighted Pakistan being a middle-income country and thus placed in the low human development category as per the HDI (2015) ranks Pakistan 147 of 188 countries. Ashraf, Ali, and Hosain (2013) investigated that Pakistan exhibits detachment and non-convergence between youth policy frameworks and Pakistan's national and provincial education policies. The paper derives insights from the use of capability approach to inform education and youth policies for capitalizing youth bulge.

Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Sindh, Pakistan envisions prosperous energetic and resilient youth through progressive policy interventions and provision of rightsbased, fair, equitable and mindful opportunities. (Sindh Youth Policy, 2018, p. 25). UNESCO takes an initiative-taking approach to preventing violent extremism by advocating human rights and open communication in order to prevent and combat the hatred and ignorance that spurs violent extremism. Stewart (2018) defines resilience as a socio-ecological system upheld by community, society, state response to violence and urge for restoring peace and harmony. As cited in discussion paper, Taylor (2016) emphasizes building young people's resilience by engaging them in policy formulation and implementation. Cultural relation approach as advocated by Stewart (2018) is keen on improving relationships in contact zones.



This relationship subsequently helps restoring connections which are broken and are not as operation as desired for peacebuilding. The flawed nexus of community, society and state results in distrust and serves as a push factor for vulnerability of youth to violent extremism. The approach club attributes and characteristics connected with resilience development into four major, interconnected clusters of resources related with personal resilience: ‘Confidence, Purposefulness, Adaptability and Social Support.’ Brown (2018) has described ‘connectedness, opportunities for participation and contribution, high self-expectations stemming from self-esteem, empathy and ability to network These are all 21st century life skills life skills amounting to resilience development. This in turn helps to develop social capital and give psycho-social support when youth is confronted with the dilemma of vulnerability to be recruited by violent extremism organizations.

National Education Policy of Pakistan (2009, p.) does mention school safety, peace education and life skill base education as focal areas for policy intervention and pledges to integrate these themes into the curricula and teacher training programs. National Education Policy (2017, p. aims to promote human rights, international understanding, global citizenship. HEC Vision2025 also highlights Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, combating extremism at HEIs campus through active citizenship is instrumental. In the current scenario, employability skills required to meet the challenges of globalization, green economy and digital divide assume central role National Education Policy Framework (2018, p.2) reinforces that Pakistan has the responsibility to equip its young people with knowledge, creativity, critical thinking and leadership skills so that they can make the right choices for themselves, their country and play a responsible role as global citizens. National Education Policy Draft (2017, p.76) states that education above or after secondary school level is normally categorized as higher or tertiary education. International Standards Classification of Education- ISCE-2011 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2012, Montreal, Canada) considers higher education includes short-cycle tertiary education, Bachelors, Masters, and doctoral or equivalent levels. Pakistan being signatory of global declaration and framework of action titled ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals’ has committed SDG 4 focuses on education. SDG 4 aims to achieve 7 targets. Target No 4.3 relates to technical, vocational, and higher education.



Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (2010) has portrayed dismal condition of higher education sector in terms of federal and provincial role and blurred roadmap for implementation. The Federal Government is left with a limited scope to deal with international treaties, education in federal territories and inter-government coordination. Pakistan essentially needs to design national coordinating mechanism for curriculum for ensuring cohesion, equitable opportunities to all. In this backdrop, active citizenship education may be integrated into undergraduate education as a herald to social justice in Pakistan.

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Pakistan have experienced unprecedented on-campus violent extremism. The Dawn reported that three "well-educated" students have been arrested for being involved in Safoora Goath, Karachi incident. A third-year student at Government S.E. College, Bahawalpur is reported to have stabbed his teacher to death over vaguely described "anti-Islam" comments. An on-campus wild mob at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan killed.

Mashal Khan; 23-year-old student. Cursor of Education and Development in Pakistan (CODE2019, p.3) research report related to countering violent extremism on campuses highlights that in spite of evidences of on-campus prevailing extremism at HEIs in Pakistan, the national framework or policy discourse aligned with international practices and commitments does not exist.

Abbasi (2014) investigated to find means and methods for disengaging the youth from extremist tendencies and vulnerability to Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) for de-radicalization through educational provisions. Basit (2015) evaluated the counter de-radicalized initiatives in ecosystem of Pakistan. Qadri (2015) has also investigated a theoretical underpinning about how the current educational system could be used for countering violent extremism. Qadri identified the gap in solutions proposed in the earlier research about the eradication of violent extremism through educational policies in Pakistan as following:

“No strategy aimed at rooting out terrorism and extremism can be successful unless the policymakers comprehend the underlying principles and core components of the radicalization process. Doing so is central to making community engagement a result-oriented and worthwhile exercise. Community



development is a major component in active citizenship. While different models have been enunciated to describe the process of radicalization, three components namely personal grievance, religion-political ideology and mobilization have been common to each model.” (p.23).

However, most recommendations suggested by Qadri are quite similar to those reported in other research and literature. Peracha, Ayub, Khan, Farooq, Zahra (2017) conducted qualitative research and designed Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale indigenously. Paracha et al. (2017) stated that Violent Extremism Beliefs Scale (VEBS) can serve the purpose of assessment tool in Pakistan wherein vulnerability screening may inform the research led intervention for correctional services”. (p. 53).

National Union of Students (NUS) & GuildHE (2016) cited World Conference on Higher Education, 2009 advocating “Higher education institutions, through their fundamental mandate (research, teaching and service to the community) should promote active citizenship”. NUS& GuildHE report highlights the role of higher education in developing active citizenship. Active citizenship is beneficial for students, HEIs and society alike. Students feel empowered to contribute to their communities, get involved politically and consider a wider perspective. They gain valuable employability skills, enjoy enhanced mental health, have a better connection with communities and become agents of change. Institutions benefit because a culture of active citizenship contributes to the sense of accomplishment for thriving in the community. NUS & GuildHE report highlights “six key areas: volunteering, democratic engagement, environmental sustainability, community engagement, global citizenship and reflection and development. It explores how each can be embedded into the university experience, both academic and extracurricular, and identifies the benefits of supporting students to become active citizens.” The report further concludes that HEIs at UK are less keen on active citizenship than in other countries such as the US and Singapore, wherein active citizenship education is likely to be embedded in institutional life. The European Economic & Social Committee (EESC) encourages active citizenship across Europe. The EESC is the institutional channel that enables citizens and their organizations to make their voices heard as major stakeholder in EU policymaking. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and British Council (BC) had launched the Active Citizens Program for students of all degree awarding institutions. It is



training program and needs to be institutionalized through integration of Active Citizenship in Curriculum as short-term impact of training does not suffice the mandate of Active Citizenship Education through HEIs in Pakistan. Annual Report -2017 of Federal Public Service Commission, Government of Pakistan (FPSC-Gop) depicts the deficiency of developing critical thinking through education. Most of the students who studied at public schools join public sector universities with their academic attainment backlog. The examiners on the panel of FPSC-Gop were of the opinion HEIs in Pakistan need to be communicated the findings of this report so that HEIs curriculum offerings focus on linking higher education with the world of work to bridge the skill-gaps.

Samuel (2022) highlights the challenges of capitalizing the role of education for preventing violent extremism; the lack of studies on the effectiveness of educational interventions in P/CVE; the inherent limitations of such interventions when addressing certain drivers of radicalization and the possibility of teachers and teaching institutes not willing or sufficiently equipped or trained to take such a role.

Cursor of Development and Education Pakistan (CODE 2019, p.46) recommend that university level institutional policy guidelines to inform mindful intervention in a non- conflict, conflict and, post- conflict situations at HEIs in Pakistan. Peace Direct (2016, p.5) analyzed that the Government of Pakistan's National Action Plan (NAP) for countering violent extremism is inclined towards military solutions and sufficient attention has not been paid to the root causes of this menace. It is noted that a massive radical reform of the education system is needed to develop critical analysis skills among youth enabling them to challenge violent extremist narratives. It is imperative that all peacebuilding and CVE strategies should draw on local knowledge too in order to be context specific. Active citizenship education needs to be institutionalized in HEIs in Pakistan to prevent vulnerability of youth to violent Extremism. For preventing and countering homegrown violent extremism, homegrown local and indigenous approaches are required. On the pattern of Active Citizenship framework provided in NUS-Guild HE (2016), six pillars of active citizenship designed for higher education institutions and students' unions keen to carry forward agenda of active citizenship education need to be institutionalized. Active citizenship education is instrumental in being beneficial for students,



institutions, and society. Taking insights from NUS-Guild HE reports (2016), integration of active citizenship into curriculum for undergraduate level has been recommended.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

Insights into development the research questions have been derived from the four main questions and tasks in practical theology outlined by Richard Osmer:

1. What's happening? Descriptive-empirical task Collecting information to better understand patterns and dynamics in specific episodes, situations, or contexts.
2. What is the reason behind this? Utilizing theories from the arts and sciences to gain insight into and elucidate the reasons behind these patterns and dynamics.
3. What should be happening? Task: Utilizing theological concepts to analyze specific episodes, situations, or contexts, establishing ethical standards to direct our actions, and drawing insights from successful practices.
4. How can we address this? Practical task: Identifying effective action strategies to positively impact situations and engaging in reflective dialogue to address any feedback that arises from their implementation.

Research Design

This research aims to steer clear of methodological monism, which refers to relying solely on one research method. This is not because of a struggle to choose between the pros and cons of different options. Research may incorporate aspects of both positivist and interpretivist approaches, with careful management.

Surveys allow researchers to gather information about practices, situations, or views at a specific moment through questionnaires or interviews. Surveys allow researchers to examine multiple variables simultaneously, which is often challenging in laboratory or field experiments, and collect data from real-world environments. One major drawback is the challenge of gaining insights into the causes or processes behind the measured phenomena. Furthermore, there are various sources of bias to consider, including the potential self-selecting nature of respondents, the timing of the survey, and the researcher's influence on the survey design.

Research in subjective/argumentative fields, such as hermeneutics and phenomenology, demands that the researcher take on a creative or speculative role instead of remaining a mere



observer. This technique is valuable for constructing new theories, generating fresh ideas, and then testing them. Nevertheless, being an unstructured and subjective form of research, there is a high likelihood of researcher bias. To prevent bias as described earlier, the baseline survey serves as the initial stage of the project. Surveys alone cannot fully capture real-life phenomena. To enhance the survey data, qualitative data will be collected through field notes, campus climate observations, and analysis of policy/curriculum documents, along with conducting semi structured interviews related to active citizenship education. The research philosophy relies on deductive reasoning, utilizing the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The study utilized a mixed-method research design. An integrated research design involves gathering, analyzing, and combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or multiple studies to comprehend a research issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It is assumed that utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods together offers a deeper insight into the research problem and question compared to using either method alone. There are multiple reasons for utilizing a mixed-method design to conduct the study. Using a mixed-method design can be beneficial for researchers looking to leverage the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data, like scores on instruments, generate specific data points that can be statistically analyzed, leading to results that help identify the frequency and extent of trends and offer valuable insights into patterns among a large group of individuals. Qualitative data, like open-ended interviews capturing the words of individuals in the study, offer diverse perspectives on a research topic and paint a detailed picture of the situation. When the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data, a comprehensive understanding of the situation is achieved (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, researchers can create a detailed understanding of social phenomena (Green & Caracelli, 1997). This study utilizes the 'Explanatory Sequential Design' (ESD), where quantitative and qualitative information is collected sequentially in two phases, with one form of data collection following and informing the others. Creswell (2012) states that Explanatory Sequential Design is widely used in educational research as a mixed method design. This approach is based on the idea that quantitative data and results offer a broad overview of the research problem. Further analysis, particularly using qualitative data, is necessary to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon being studied.

Research Site, Sampling and Data Collection Tools



The research study aims to analyze the current state of active citizenship education at Public Sector General Universities in Sindh Province. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, a survey questionnaire was distributed to final year/8th semester students.

The survey sample includes students from different faculties such as Education, Management Sciences, Science, Islamic Learning, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities. Among these faculties, the selected departments are Psychology, Education, Islamic Studies, Pakistan Studies, English, Urdu, Business Education, Public Administration, Computer Science, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. The sample was intentionally selected to represent final year students' feedback on Active Citizenship Education, Youth Leadership Development, and the overall campus climate to provide a comprehensive view of the experience at the selected General & Public Sector Universities in Sindh.

To enhance the data, semi-structured interviews were carried out. The participants were five Deans of Faculty from various universities in Sindh province.

Kitzinger, as mentioned in Grey (2014), emphasized that focus groups are perfect for delving into people's ideas and insights. Group discussion with various university officials including the Student Advisor, Director of Student Guidance, Counselling & Placement Bureau, Quality Enhancement Cell Director, and Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization Director.

For this purpose, 08 informants were chosen using purposive sampling from the 08 sampled Universities. Studying international practices and policies will help in creating institutional policies for youth development.

Data Analysis procedure

Quantitative Data was analyzed using Statistical Data Analysis Techniques. The base line survey informed reframing semi structured interview and FDGS. For Qualitative data analysis thematic coding and triangulation techniques were employed.

Ethical considerations

This research study strictly adhered to the rules and policies set by the sampled universities, Higher Education Commission, Government of Pakistan, and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the funding agency a per standard social science and education research. The



office of research, innovation, and commercialization (ORIC) of each sampled university was approached to seek permission prior to data collection.

Major Findings, implications, and Discussion on Status of Active Citizenship at HEIs in Sindh

The findings are based on Active Citizenship Status Survey (ACSS) conducted in 8 public Sector universities across Sindh. A total of 2500 students enrolled in undergraduate programs participated in the study and offered their opinion on the nine constructs of ACSS.

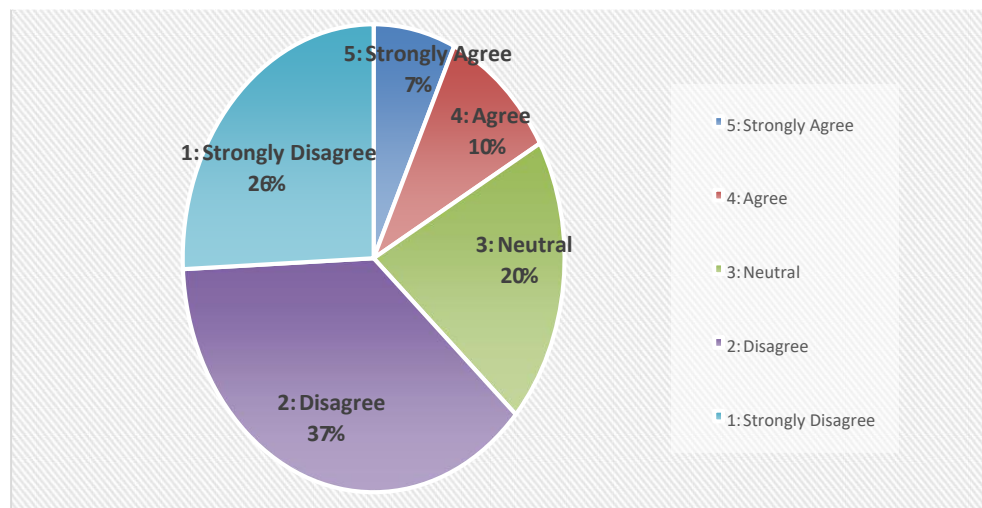
The baseline survey informed designing qualitative data collection through semi structured interview and Focus Group Discussions with various higher education administration stakeholders. The discussion section relies on international policy and practices documents containing case studies to inform evidence based higher education policy and practices for youth development through active citizenship education. It is expected to serve as proactive strategy for resilient youth leadership development to countering violent extremism at HEIs in Pakistan.

Construct 1

Status of *Youth Development and Leadership* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 1

Youth Development and Leadership



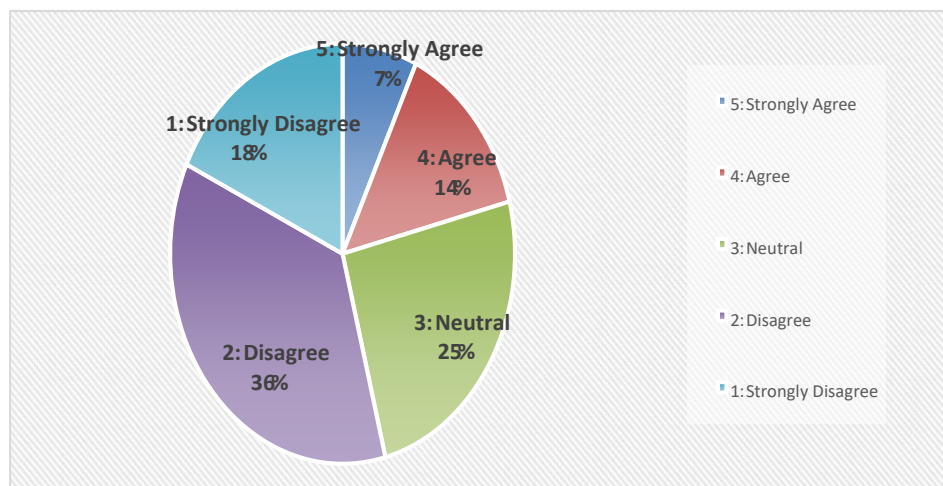


Youth development pertains to education in decision-making, interaction with peers, acquiring a sense of belonging, participating in the creative arts, physical activity, and health education. Only 17 % of the accessed undergraduate students from among 8 public sector universities confirm the interventions and trainings to develop these key skills while 64% disagree with the statements.

The qualitative data from various stakeholders among university administration also synchronizes with the status of Active Citizenship Education in terms of financial and capacity building challenges hampering youth development initiatives.

Construct 2: Status of *Career Preparatory Experiences for Developing Employability Skills* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 2
Career Preparatory Experiences for Developing Employability Skills



Career preparatory experiences for developing employability skills are connected with job hunt, writing convincing CV and job specific cover letter, adjusting to workplace, employment & employability skills. The status of developing these key skills as indicated through Figure.2 is 21% while 54% of the youth is confirming that such skills are not developed through university curricular offerings.

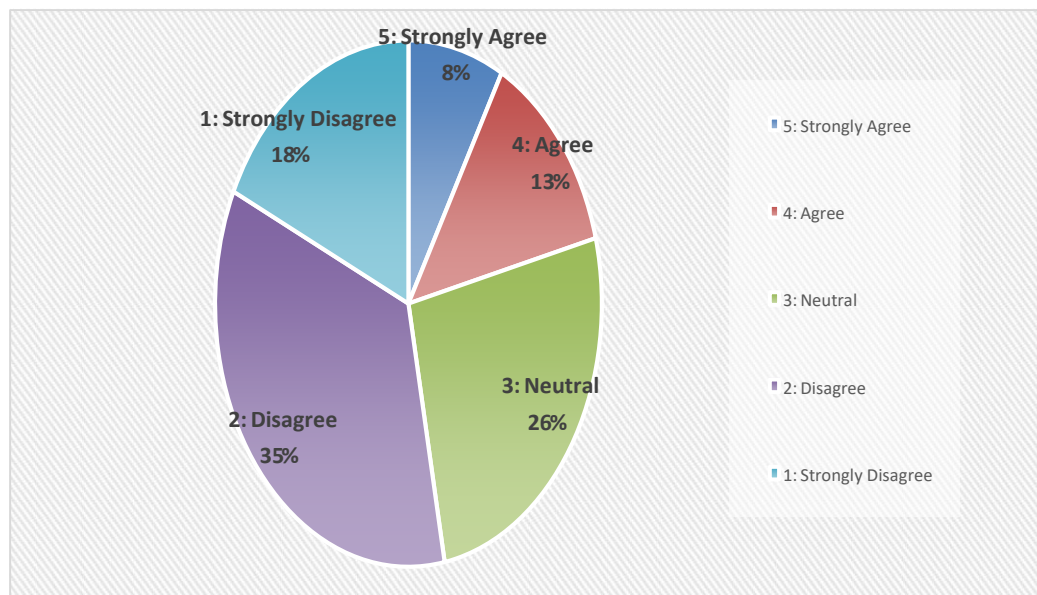
Qualitative data from various stakeholders bring forth certain challenges. Although Guidance, Counseling and Career Development Centre (s) do exist in almost all the sampled universities, imparting employment and employability skills remains a big challenge. The curriculum needs to be connected with the work of the world and faculty needs training in practicing and



andragogical skills. Federal Public service Commission (FPSC) Report (s) also highlighted that such skills are deficit in the candidates. FPSC conducted a special exam for Sindh provinces as seats remained vacant due to non-availability of the candidates with prerequisite employability skills. Higher Education Commission Vision-2030 and Undergraduate Policy-2020 focuses on competency base learning.

Construct 3: Status of *Active Citizenship* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 3
Active Citizenship



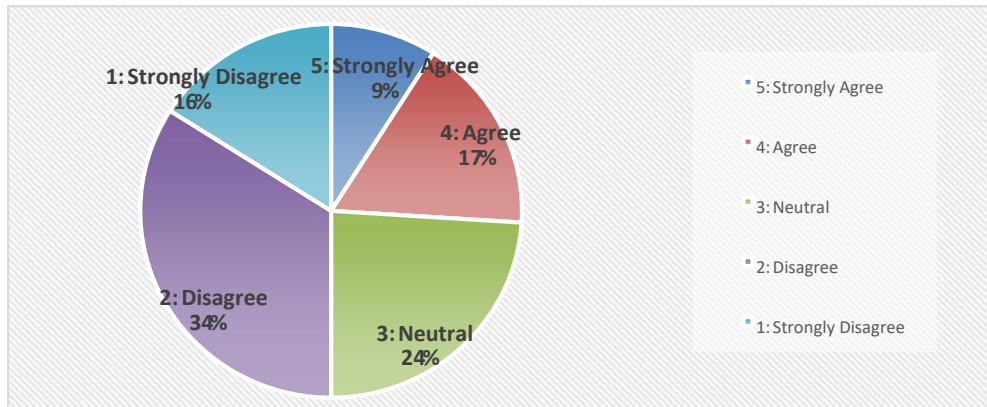
Training in Active Citizenship is culmination and combination of volunteering, democratic engagement, community development, global citizenship, critical thinking, and reflection. Only 21 % of the accessed undergraduate students from among 8 public sector universities in Sindh Province agree to have developed these key skills while 53% think that they are underdeveloped. Moreover, 26% of students remained neutral. Qualitative data from various stakeholders reflected certain challenges in institutionalizing active citizenship education. A number of barriers to student volunteering. Research has indicated that students who are most likely to volunteer are those already engaged in extracurricular activities. Those who cannot afford the time, or who need to work part time, are unable to volunteer. Universities in Pakistan need strong data base of accredited organizations for the placement of volunteers.



Construct 4: Status of *Volunteering* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 4

Volunteering

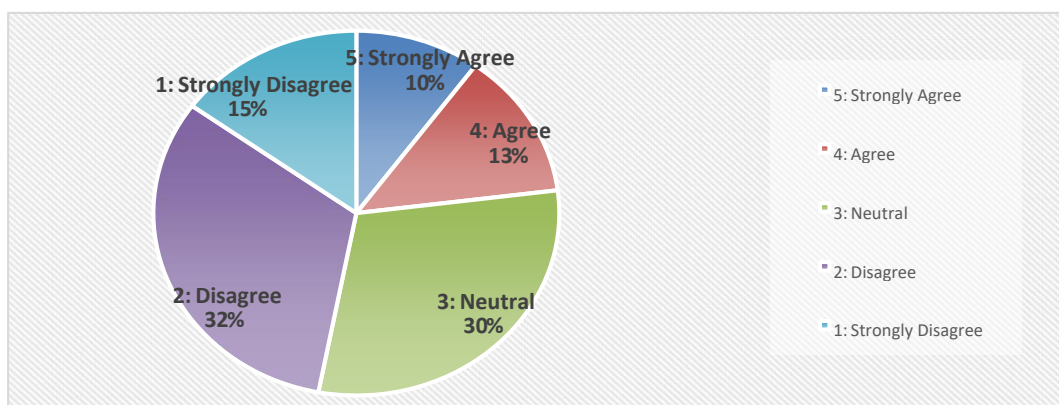


Result: It is clear from chart that 26% students affirmed university's role about volunteering in order to develop graduate employability, university provides experience in areas such as financial management, event planning, volunteer management and time management, university rewards and validates extra-curricular activities as part of the core university experience. Access to volunteering is denied to 50% percent of students resulting in skill deficient. The qualitative data is in harmony with quantitative baseline results as administrators have identified certain bottlenecks hampering access to volunteering opportunities. 74 % undergraduate students enrolled at HEIs in UK volunteer as major bottlenecks have been removed.

Construct 5: Status of *Democratic Engagement* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 5

Democratic Engagement



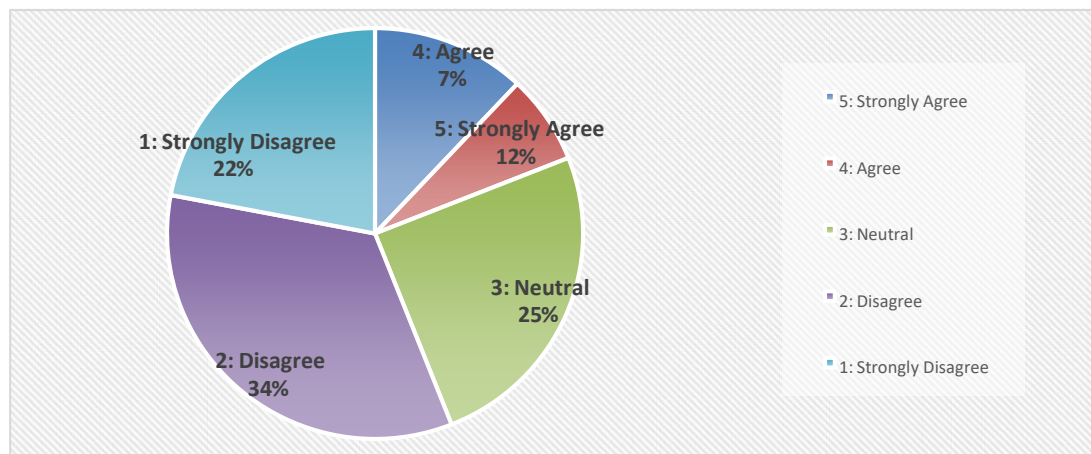


Only 23% of students affirmed their participation in Democratic Engagement is quite alarming. 46% students could not access the initiatives of democratic engagement like encouraging voter registration and voter turnout, empowering youth for building networks and developing peer mentoring schemes, representation of the youth in committees., clubs and societies to develop understanding meeting processes, public speaking and diplomacy skills. The students' data shows that university does not provide awareness and motivation to sign petitions for human rights advocacy at regional, national, and international level. The neutral response of 30% of students implies strong reforms in the role and responsibilities of universities regarding democratic engagement. It is imperative in view of a ban on student unions in Pakistan since 1984. Qualitative data has generated certain bottlenecks in promoting democratic engagement among youth for promoting peace and developing resilience.

Construct 6: Status of *Environmental Sustainability* at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 6

Environmental Sustainability

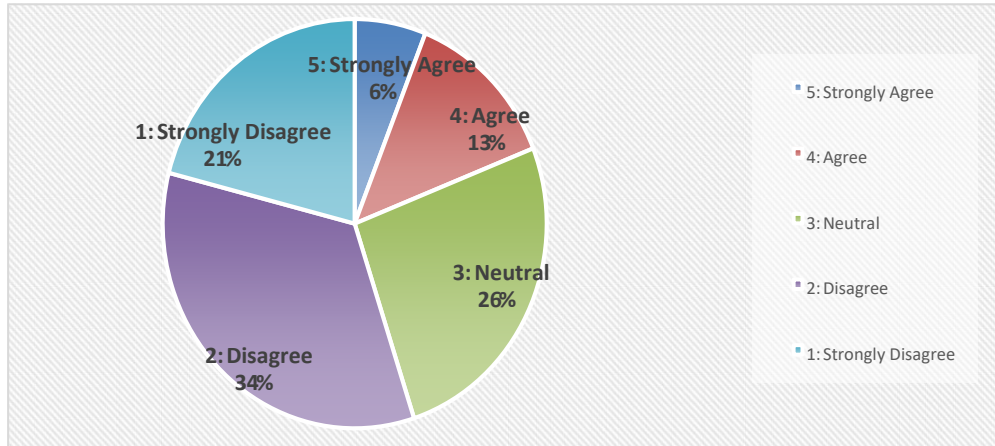


It is clear from chart 19% students affirm and understand that university's role about Environmental Sustainability is significant and they were of the opinion that the university provides opportunities for development of graduates as environmentally conscious citizens, sustainability literacy as a core competency for graduates encouraging arranging events like 'Go Green Week' and Earth Day, promoting awareness among students for making green consumer choices and validating extra-curricular activities focusing on recycling procedures, reducing carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity and developing energy conservation measures. 25% of students remained neutral and 56% students denied university's role about environmental sustainability.



Construct 7: Status of Community Engagement at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

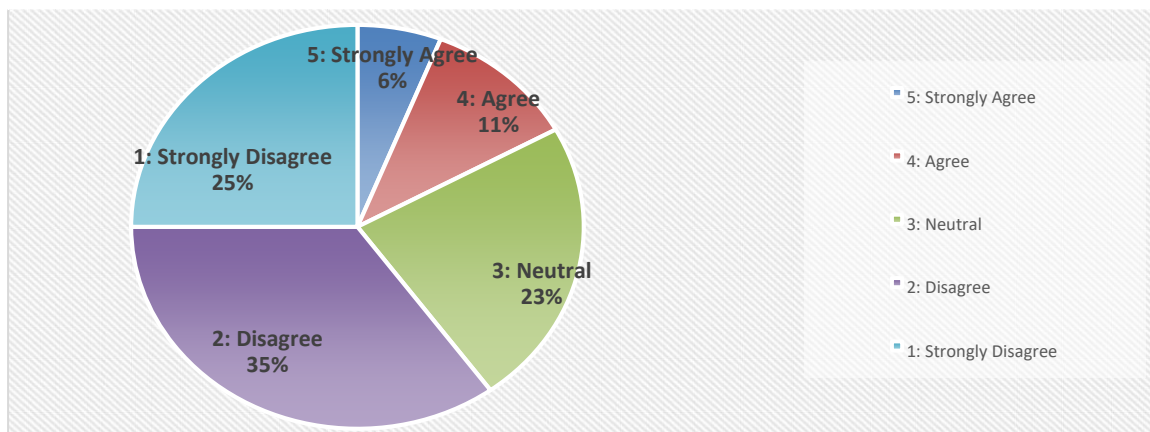
Figure 7
Community Engagement



Only 19% students agree that University's role about Community Engagement is significant and they voiced their opinion that their university provides service learning; an approach to teaching and learning in which students are placed in real-life situations, courses address community problems and partnership with the local community is promoted in order to educate students on issues such as anti-social behavior, noise, litter and crime prevention. Organizing cultural events jointly with community partners is encouraged. But 55% of the students disagree that such opportunities exist or are made accessible.

Construct 8: Global Citizenship at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 8
Global Citizenship

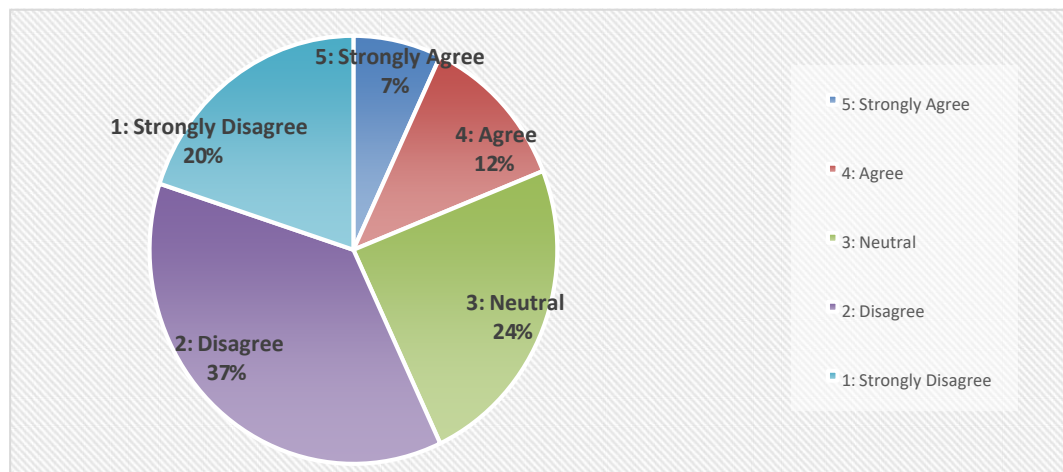




It is clear from the chart that the larger proportion 60% of the students disagree that define the list of qualities that a graduate will have developed over the course of their studies provide support for students' reflection and development. This vast majority opinion regarding skills and learning to make a real contribution to society locally, nationally, and internationally through course content for develop globally conscientious, socially respectful, and self-reflective graduates is not encouraging. Only 17% of students agree that university courses, curricular and extra-curricular activities develop global citizenship.

Construct 9: Reflection and Development at Sampled HEIs in Sindh Province

Figure 9
Reflection and Development



Result : It is clear from chart that the larger proportion 19% of the students agree that their university define the list of qualities that a graduate will have developed over the course of their studies and provides support for students' reflection and development, University develops skills and learning to make a real contribution to society locally, nationally and internationally, the university courses have content to develop globally conscientious for developing socially respectful and self-reflective graduates.

Discussion and Analysis

Limitation of the study

This research study is limited to exploring Active Citizenship Education in only 8 samples.



Public Sector General Universities in Sindh.03 Public Sector General Universities of Sindh Province have been purposefully excluded being newly established universities. However, keeping in view the data points from each faculty, the sample is representative to map the status of active citizenship education in general universities in Sindh provinces. The departments like Political Science, Social Work, Sociology, and Gender Studies have core curriculum areas regarding democratic participation, political activism, human Rights Education, Community Engagement and overlap with Active Citizenship Education. That is why the departments with theoretical underpins have been selected.

The implication for future research

The research may be extended to exploring active citizenship education at public and private universities of Sindh province for holistic picture of HEIs in Sindh. As Countering Violent Extremism employs multiple approaches so further research may inform using Practical Theology Education as a proactive approach to P/CVE. The phenomenon may exclusively be studied at Medical and Engineering Universities. The data pertaining to Violent Extremist Organization (VEOs) recruitment patterns and vulnerability rate of Youth in Pakistan may inform research led preventive and remedial approaches embedded in Pakistani ecosystem.

Conclusion

Active Citizenship Education is beneficial for students, Higher Education Institutes, and young undergraduate students alike. Through this, Students are empowered to contribute to their communities, get involved politically and consider a wider perspective. They gain valuable employability skills, enjoy enhanced mental health, have a better connection with communities and become agents of change. Institutions benefit because a culture of active citizenship contributes to the sense that an Institution has a wider role to play in society whether locally, nationally, or internationally. Society benefits from engaged and community-focused members of society who contribute to the public good.

In this backdrop, HEIs in Pakistan, while aligning curricula in accordance with Higher Education Commission, Government of Pakistan guidelines for Undergraduate Education Polivc-2020 are required to institutionalize Active Citizenship Education. The policy emphasizes creativity in order to foster exploration, curiosity, and discovery amongst student. The policy document introduction (page.1) read as:



‘The approach adopted here recognizes the complex outcomes of the learning process, often divided into four components: knowledge (disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic, and procedural), skills (writing, oral communication, ICT-related skills, quantitative analysis, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical and creative thinking, and learning to learn), professional behavior (self-regulation, time management, integrity, intellectual curiosity, intellectual openness), and interpersonal attributes (empathy, self-efficacy, collaboration.’

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