

## Pedagogy as a factor of (In)tolerance: An Analysis of Teaching Practices at the University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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### Abstract

*The study explores the relationship between teaching practices and the level of tolerance at higher education institutions through the concurrent triangulation method. The Mix Method Research technique was used to analyze the data. For qualitative data, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with a focus on understanding the teaching patterns and practices at the university. The level of interpersonal tolerance among students was measured through an existing scale. The thematic discussion on issues of equality in the learning process; teachers' reflective practices; Discussion and debate in the classroom; creativity and critical thinking; freedom of speech and expression; and students' self-confidence and authority in the learning process are the focus of this paper. The study reveals that learner-centred instruction, which focuses on engaging students and providing them with a broader perspective, facilitates logical debates among students from diverse backgrounds.*

### Key Words:

University, pedagogy, extremism, tolerance, Focus group discussion.

### Introduction

In his book *Einstein: His Life and Times*, Albert Einstein is reported (Frank, 2008: 213) as saying, "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the minds to think." Teachers should therefore be concerned with inspiring students to learn cooperatively, collaboratively, and inclusively. A flexible method of instruction, a two-way exchange of knowledge, and the provision of thought-provoking, say-and-act class activities are all necessary. Banking education is discouraged by the existing information sharing and enhancement through a shared process of learning (Naseem, & Ayaz, 2016; Mehta and Pandya, 2017).

As many countries around the world have high literacy rates while yet being comparatively underdeveloped, a high literacy rate alone is not a guarantee of acceptance, stability, growth, and equality in society. However, Freire's conception of education seeks to understand education in its truest form and aids in the transformation of oppressive circumstances. In most undeveloped countries, a lack of critical pedagogy fosters social conduct that dehumanizes others, and the worst aspect is a mindset that has no idea of tolerance. As a result, Pakistani students attending educational institutions exhibit bigotry at a very hazardous level. Semi-intransitive consciousness is not innate to humans; rather, it is ingrained in them as a result of oppression and unfair social structure (Raja, 2005; Rothman, 2014).

The culture of teacher-centred learning encourages students to remain dependent on their teachers and supervisors. Most frequently, teacher-centred learning ignores the value of open inquiry, which can happen at any point during the course of instruction. The student recognizes the control over any priori-justified topic (Schraw & Robinson, 2011). According to Liu, Qiao, and Liu (2006), even though learner-centred education is highly valued in universities, the teacher-centred method is still widely used in most of the world, especially in developing nations. Students' potential cannot be recognized and underlined with teacher-centred and root learning (Tabulawa & Tjombé, 2004, Schweisfurth, 2011; Dembélé 2005; Westbrook, et al, 2013).

Freire (2005) argues against the banking style of education, which emphasizes passive learning and excludes teacher-student contact. Using international approaches, local examples might be used to augment the instruction. As a result, various groups are encouraged to be innovative, creative, and respectful of one another. According to Freire, certain pupils are neglected by teachers who adopt a teacher-centred approach, and as a result, they experience oppression. The banking model of education treats students as data banks that are stocked with memories so that they can recall material when needed. According to Ibrahim and Omori (2018) and Nagda, B.R.A., Gurin, and Lopes (2003), students believe that professors are perpetually correct and that there is no room for error from their point of view.

Tursunov (2016) mentioned that student-centred pedagogy puts the needs and interests of the students first and encourages active participation from the students in the classroom learning process. Instead of serving as an instructor, the teacher serves as a facilitator. When a learner seeks assistance in comprehending a concept, the teacher manages their learning activities. The instructor participates in class activities and aids

in the process of learning. The teacher is a member of the class and a contributor to the learning process. Learners, in critical pedagogy, are the primary agents in the learning process, making them involved in the process. This method helps students become independent, critical, democratic, and accountable members of society in addition to improving their academic achievement (Mendoza, 2016; Ghosh et al, 2016).

Shaukat and Ahmad (2021) stated that in an effective learning setting, active and reflective learning takes place in a supportive learning environment with a well-structured classroom, cognitive activation, and status quo challenge. However, where there is cognitive stimulation and learner-oriented activities in classrooms, theoretical understanding and pragmatic motivation are achievable. Constructivists advocated learner-centred instruction, in which students actively constructed their knowledge along with comprehension through exchanges. Student restructures skills and knowledge within their cognitive galvanization. Constructivists think that teachers should not impose their linking or disliking on the students, but rather teach the skills of distinguishing between right and wrong. (Anderlini, Cowick, & Holmes, (2017; Vieluf, et al, 2012).

## **Methodology**

The study was carried out using the Mix Method Research (MMR) technique through the Concurrent Triangulation Method (CTM). This method was used for the analysis of pedagogy at the University of Peshawar and the level of students' tolerance. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to establish the relationship between pedagogy and student tolerance level. Qualitative data was collected through Ten (10) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) from students of different academic departments of the university while quantitative data was collected from the same group through an already established Interpersonal Tolerance Scale and content analysis of FGDs. Positivism a research philosophy was used for the analysis of quantitative data, the interpretive paradigm was used for the analysis of qualitative data and pragmatism was used for the analysis of the mixed method.

## **Qualitative Data Analysis**

### **Equality in the learning process**

In this whole process, no one is superior or inferior, both teachers and students have equal positions, as in the absence of one, the other is just useless, and both are dependent on each other. The relationship between teacher and students is like leader and follower, which are inseparable from one another. In the learning process, one is the justification of the other. Teachers and students are like the wheels of a vehicle; whose cooperation and support make the wheel of learning move forward.

*“Majority of the teachers did not provide such an environment where students feel at ease and learn in a friendly environment. There is a huge gap between teachers and students. Some of the teachers shorten this gap. The majority is not like this”.*

Students said the classroom environment is unfriendly and a wide gap between students and teachers is prevailing. Though, according to Scharf (2016) both teachers and students are the co-partners of the learning process and Freire (1970, 1997) believed that teachers and students have very fluid relationships, such as the teacher is a learner and the learner is a teacher. From this argument student is not only the receiver of knowledge, but also the creator of knowledge as well. As “no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught, men teach each other, mediated by the teacher” (p. 67).

### **Teacher's Reflective Practices**

Making new and inventive teachings that bring old and dead knowledge to life as it lies dead in the books. Through actual examples of dead objects, the teacher brings them to life. Old knowledge is useless unless it is connected to and integrated with the realities of the present. If the outdated knowledge is not connected to current events, it is useless and of no significance. We encounter new things every day that are connected to the subject matter we are learning and should be explained with the aid of previous knowledge.

*“Most of the teachers did not prepare for class; instead, they copied lectures that had already been delivered. We become disinterested in class because of the outdated and uninteresting way they deliver the material. We attend class purely out of habit because we are confident that the teacher will teach the book exactly as it is.”*

In the conversation, the respondents stated that they needed fresh ideas, which should be different from the old and outdated literature; or at least with new representations as mentioned by Freire (1970) mentioned that over time, textbooks become less pertinent to the actual state of affairs.

## **Discussion and Debate in the Classroom**

Human beings feel aggression for those things, which may not be good or not on merit according to them. These unscrupulous things make them aggressive and assertive in their daily lives. The state tries to cool down such aggression of the citizens through different means, like, sports, recreational activities and entertainment programs. However, in university classrooms, these young people can cool down through dis-embosom. If teachers give opportunity to students to discuss things in an open and free environment and share what they have in their minds and hearts. As Coser says “conflict engenders conflicts”, and it multiplies with exponents and reaches a position, which is out of solution. Therefore,

conflicts and confusion should be stopped at the initial stage through discussion and sharing with others in a controlled environment such as a classroom in the presence of the teacher.

*Teachers do not hear our point and say that next time they have to complete their course irrespective of whether the students understand or not. This attitude of teachers suppresses students' thinking ability remains in their minds and is not disclosed to others. Teachers intentionally make us silent in class.*

In developed countries, both teacher and student-centred approaches are exposed to public debate and real-life experiences. This debate and discussion on real life take the student out of the pseudo-reality that is constructed in the space, which has no connection with the reality on the ground (Sablonnie're, Taylor & Sadykova, 2009). However, in the current situation at university students are intentionally or unintentionally kept silent and stop them for further thinking.

### **Question/answer session**

Teachers teach their course in the assigned time duration and number of classes. The allotted time is mostly not enough for the completion of the course. Therefore, most of the time in the classroom is spent teaching the course in one-way interaction and the reason behind this is to save time and energy. In this mode of teaching, more or less students are not able to understand the concepts so they ask questions from teachers to put more attention on the concept.

*When the teacher came to the class he said "Any questions from the previous lecture" and students asked questions if any. This discussion not only satisfies our questions but is also a form of previous lecture revision. However, unfortunately, most of the students do not ask their questions.*

As mentioned in the statement students are asked the early question in the class but due to unseen fear, they are reluctant to ask questions from teachers. The reason behind this is not only the teacher's fear but also the classmate's weird behaviour. Most students think that asking questions is a waste of time (Foley, P. (2007).

### **Creativity and Critical/Rational Thinking**

Students at Schools and colleges have uniform academic and non-academic activities such as textbooks and uniform dress. Such reading and attire limitations do not exist at the university level. With some cultural and moral restraints, one can wear whatever at university, and they can read the topics and concepts from wherever they choose, which they believe to be simple to comprehend. At the university level, they are not constrained and bound to already established patterns of behaviours and acts, therefore they are emancipated from the conventional attire and textbooks.

*Teachers talk to us like we're in school or college. They handed us a book and instructed us to peruse it and memorize the information for the paper. This method of instruction, in my opinion, rarely fosters critical thinking or originality in students.*

According to Anderlini, Cowick & Holmes, (2017) demonstrated that students in higher education are considerably more mature and aware of their environment, which negates the necessity for uniform dress and textbooks. Every book, whether recommended by the teacher or not, serves as their textbook. The conventional educational model pushes pupils to memorize textbooks and concentrate on the information-repetition portions of exams. Student's academic performance is generally affected by the passive and dominant nature of the education system in developing nations, students' obedience to teachers, racial and ethnic prejudice, a lack of critical awareness, and conformity with oppression.

### **Freedom of Expression and Speech**

One of the human fundamental rights is freedom of expression and speech. Freedom of expression and speech is very crucial for the masses in general and students in the classroom in particular. Without freedom of speech and expression, there is no discussion and dialogue, which is the source of knowledge. Thought in the mind is nothing until and unless they are presented in the form of speech or the form of writing. Critical analysis of the thought would be only possible when it is expressed and shared with others. The world's great inventions and innovations were once an unexpressed thought, but when they came out of the mind they brought revolution to the world. However, for sharing and expressing thought there should be freedom.

*If we ask questions or counter the teacher's argument, they say that this is in the book and we should learn as it is, we cannot change or even discuss it. Teachers said that keep their views to themselves and note them as taught. They are not allowing us to talk, they say, see in the book, everything is there in the book.*

The identity and integrity of the students are respected, moreover, inclusive classrooms should be exclusive for each student, supporting the growth of learner attitudinal changes through active learning. The main goal of education is to boost students' self-confidence while encouraging their ability to think, question, and inquiry through dynamic curricula and timed instruction. Teachers stimulate critical thinking so that students may connect different concepts and put them learned into practice. Active learning should take place in the classroom. The classroom should be engaging, instructive, and active in order to foster students' critical thinking and comprehension. (Al-Zu'be, 2013).

### **Self-Confidence in Classroom**

Education is made of three C's; first is Critical thinking second is Creativity and third is Confidence. One of the main purposes of the learning process is to make the students self-confident in the classroom. Self-confidence means that students can express their viewpoints in front of others and have a valid justification for their hypothesis. There is a role

of a teacher in making students self-confident. Knowledge without sharing is nothing and sharing is possible when one is self-confident. Self-confidence opens new avenues for students in their future practical life. If they are self-confident, they will survive in the market otherwise not.

*Our teachers do not encourage us to express our views to the class. If we share something wrong or inappropriate then we are scolded that we are too incompetent to understand even such an easy thing, and we learn nothing up to now. We are depressed by our teacher to participate in class activities. They do not create self-confidence in students.*

According to Mpho (2018), a teacher plays a major and preeminent role in the entire educational process in instructor-centered education. Students have little or no opportunity to raise questions and take a passive and minor role in class activities. Students are not permitted to express themselves or talk about their experiences. Students do not meet their objectives in teacher-centred pedagogy when juxtaposed with their skill synthesis (Mpho, 2018).

### **Authority in Classroom**

The classroom is a place where knowledge is shared and discussed and new concepts emerge. The classroom is like a society or laboratory for the students, where they judge and examine different aspects of life, and present generalizations to the world based on their logic and arguments. Teachers follow certain course outlines, consult books and other readings and add their insights to the teaching methodology. The other partner in the learning process is the student, who knows, personal experience; observations and understanding of the concept. Therefore, a solid and valid argument has the authority in the classroom; it may be the student or teacher.

*I think most students do not try to oppose the teacher's point on certain issues; they accept and agree with them blindly. We heard that the majority is the authority, but it doesn't work in our department, here the minority elites are the authority.*

In the conventional educational model, a teacher simply gives a lecture without considering the students' interests. The instructor is the only one with authority, and the student is only the one who receives information without challenging it in any way; they simply take it in, remember it, and reproduce it (Akyuz, Karli, & Muderrisoglu, 2017).

### **Quantitative data Analysis**

The study is explanatory in nature and carried out to establish the relationship between teaching practices and tolerance. The Mixed Method Research technique was used to find the relationship between teaching practices and the level of intolerance. Concurrent triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was used to make the results more authentic. Quantitative data was collected through an already established interpersonal tolerance scale, which was analyzed through Pearson Chi-square value.

### **Bivariate analysis of pedagogy and tolerance**

The teacher's reflective practices in class have a chi-square value of 74.786 with a df of 68 and a p-value of .004. As a dependent variable, tolerance and the teacher's reflective practices are strongly correlated, according to point probability. If the education is not critical and analytical, pupils will judge someone as acting improperly or oddly and will not attempt to understand the reasons behind their conduct.

**Table 1**

<b>SNo</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-square value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
1	Equality in the learning process	88.093	68	.002
2	Teachers' Reflective Practices	74.786	68	.004
3	Discussion and debate in the classroom	70.280	68	.004
4	Classroom Activities	52.865	68	.005
5	Questions/answer session	72.156	68	.004
6	Creativity and Critical Thinking	68.574	68	.003
7	Freedom of Expression and Speech	62.653	68	.003
8	Self-Confidence of Students	62.080	68	.002
9	Authority in Classroom	44.353	34	.010
10	Out of Course Discussion	70.862	68	.004
11	Learning Patterns/Procedure in Class	109.768	68	.004
12	Students' priorities	76.200	68	.005
13	Important things for students	68.901	68	.003

Discussion and debate in the classroom have a direct relationship with the tolerance of a student at university. The table above shows that the Pearson chi-square value of discussion and debate in the classroom with tolerance as the dependent variable is 70.280 with 68 degrees of freedom and a probability point is .004. The data shows that if the values and

behaviours of another person contradict students' own values, then they do not make an effort to understand the other person before judging them when there is no discussion and debate in the classroom.

Pearson's chi-square value of class activities is 52.865 with df 68 and a p-value is .005 where tolerance is a dependent variable. The p-value shows that classroom activities have a strong

association between class activities and tolerance. Qualitative data shows that most of the class time is spent lecturing, teachers give a lecture and students patiently listen. As mentioned above para teachers do not encourage students to debate and discuss in the classroom that is why, they do not embrace other people's behavior, even if they have very little in common.

One of the aims of university teaching is to create inquisitive-minded students, who put questions on every issue for the sake of understanding and improvement. The data shows that there is no question and answer session in the class due to a shortage of time and teachers have to complete their course in the due time frame, however, among those teachers who take a question/answer session, the student can ask questions where they feel confused. The table above shows that the chi-square value of the question/answer session is 72.156 with 68 degrees of freedom and the p-value is .004 which shows a strong association between the tolerance and the question/answer session.

Because of their creative ability and analytical skills, higher educational institutions stand apart from other lower educational institutions. HEIs create imaginative, analytical, and critical thinkers. According to the information in the table above, creativity and critical thinking have a Pearson chi-square value of 68.574, 68 degrees of freedom, and a .003 probability value, which shows that there is no place for creativity and critical thinking in the classroom, both the qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrate that pupils cannot appreciate somebody else, even if their opinions conflict with their own.

Freedom of Expression and Speech is an essential part of university-level education. Qualitative data shows that at the university there is no or/and very low level of freedom of speech and expression and particularly no one (either teacher or student) can say anything on the sensitive issues. The cross table of the dependent variable i.e. tolerance and independent variable i.e. freedom of expression and speech shows the value of probability i.e. .003 is very significant in the understanding of the association between freedom of expression and tolerance.

Data from focus group discussions shows that most university students are at the lower end regarding their self-confidence and teachers do not pay attention to boosting student's self-confidence. While the quantitative data shows a lower level of tolerance of the same FGD students. However, the data shows in the above table that the chi-square test value of self-confidence of students is 62.080, the degree of freedom is 68 and the point of probability is .002, which shows a strong association between tolerance and students' self-confidence. The data shows that students are not able to acknowledge new and unfamiliar things, even if they dislike them when they have no self-confidence.

The sole and whole authority in the Classroom is the teacher in the teacher-centred learning process as adopted at the university. The students are not considered equal co-partners in this process. The qualitative data shows that almost all of the respondents in the focus group discussion are of the view that authority is in the hands of the teacher and very few students think that authority is with the majority during discussion. The table above shows that the Pearson chi-square value of authority in the classroom is 44.353 and the degree of freedom is 34 with a significant value of p is .010. The upshot of the teacher's authoritative style in the classroom produces such students who are unable to reconsider and adjust their opinions if a conversation yields novel viewpoints.

At the university, teachers do not go for out-of-course discussion, as the students said in the focus group discussion teacher avoids discussion on sensitive issues regarding religion, state affairs etc. and another significant reason is that they have no time for out-of-course discussion. Pearson chi-square test value for out-of-course discussion in the classroom is 70.862 with 68 degrees of freedom and .004 points of probability. The p-value shows a very strong association between the course discussion and tolerance among students at the university. When teachers discuss out-of-course issues then students try to put their selves into another person's position to understand their viewpoint.

In the classroom, students learn from the teachers when they deliver the lecture, learn from the students when they share their personal experiences and even teachers learn from the students' experiences and presentations. The qualitative data shows that in university classrooms, only one pattern i.e. learning of students from teachers is predominantly adopted among all these patterns and procedures. The table above shows that the Pearson chi-square test value for learning patterns adopted at university is 109.768 with 68 degrees of freedom and a .004 value of point of probability. The values are calculated for independent variables i.e. learning patterns and dependent variables i.e. tolerance. The data shows that there is a high level of association between learning patterns and the tolerance of the students at university. The quantitative and qualitative data show that students do not believe that there are multiple accurate viewpoints for most things in the learning environment where the teacher is only a source of knowledge.

Teachers adopt several strategies for controlling disturbed and problematic students in the classroom. The students at university are mature enough and can understand the attitude of a teacher. The data from the focus group discussion shows that most of the teachers are infuriated and vexed when students create chaos in the classroom and try to disturb the teacher and students. The above table shows the value of the Pearson chi-square test, degree of freedom and point of probability is 76.200, 68 and .005 respectively. The p-value shows that the association between tolerance as a dependent variable and the teacher's controlling strategies is very high as indicated through both quantitative and qualitative data that

students do not try to respect another person, irrespective of their beliefs and behaviours where a teacher is not friendly and take the things aggressively in the classroom.

Qualitative data from the focus group discussion shows that the important things among most of the students at university are their grades and CGPA. The table shows a strong association between the important things for the students as an independent variable and the variable as a dependent variable. Pearson chi-square test value of important things for students is 68.901 with 68 degrees of freedom and a point of probability is .003. Those students whose concern is only grades and good marks rather than an analytical and critical understanding of the concepts and debate and discussion on issues have intolerant behaviour towards others who have different attitudes and actions. They reject other opinions without discussing them with them as they think that it wastes the precious time of the study.

The table shows a very strong association between the dependent variable which is cold tolerance and different themes of the independent variable which is a teaching practice. The learning process is based on equality, where teachers and students are co-partners of the process. However, qualitative data shows that there is no equality in the class between teachers and students in the process of learning. The table above shows that the Pearson chi-square test value for equality in the learning process is 55.055 with a degree of freedom is 56 and a point of probability is .001, which exposes a high significance level of two variables. Student from such learning environment tends to ignore other people's opinions, values and beliefs if they do not understand them.

Qualitative evidence reveals that while most teachers come prepared for class, their instructional strategies are not reflective. They are unable to resurrect outdated knowledge using examples from the present, such students show a high level of cold tolerance. The table indicates that the Pearson chi-square test value is 64.455, with 56 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is .001. In a teacher-centred, students think that their values and beliefs are more correct than most of the others, where there are no or low reflective teaching practices.

## **Conclusion**

Teacher thoughts and actions are very visible, reckonable, observable and effective during the process of learning and all these dimensions are associated. Education in general and teaching practices, in particular, are the best and everlasting strategies for violent extremism and intolerance. The teacher has an imperative role in students' personality building and development. Open debate and discussion in the classroom expose students to accepting and respecting diverse ideas and opinions of others. Furthermore, space is given to students for inquiry, questioning, discussion and learning through experience in the classroom. Such a liberating academic environment in the classroom builds tolerance.

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