

Discussion of attitudes towards taliban, terrorism and death



Discussion of Student's Attitudes Towards Taliban, Terrorism and Death

The present study was aimed to investigate the attitude toward Taliban, terrorism catastrophizing and death anxiety among university students. This was a cross sectional research which was conducted among students of Gandhara University Peshawar and Beaconhouse National University, Lahore.

Results show that there were no significant difference among students of both universities regarding the attitude toward Taliban and also there was no difference among gender about the attitude toward TTP. First two hypotheses have been rejected as it was hypothesized that the level of negative attitude toward Tahrek-i-Taliban Pakistan is higher among Gandhara University Peshawar students in comparison to Beaconhouse National university Lahore students. It was also hypothesized that the female have higher level of negative attitude toward TTP as compared to male students. But the overall attitude was negative. Students responded negatively on questions asked about TTP. Both cities, i. e. Lahore and Peshawar, among all other cities of Pakistan are facing terror attacks, and brutal killings carried out by TTP. Students of the both cities and both genders are equally terrorized by Taliban. TTP has accepted the responsibilities of carrying out terror attacks and has declared war against Pakistan. Leader of TTP Asmatullah Shaheen stated that " we attack on all government institutions , leader of political parties and armed forces" (DAWN, 19 April, 2014). They accepted responsibility for major attacks, for example, Manawa police academy, GOR, PAF base, and killing of 23 FC personals and many more. These attacks have built considerable negative attitude towards TTP. Specially in students the attacks on MALALA YOUSAFZI,

attacks on schools and colleges, killing of POLIO workers, doctors, and kidnapping of doctors and engineers and other professionals have created negativity towards TTP among the youth. According to SATP database, Pakistan has lost at least 50, 943 lives to terrorism just since January 1, 2003.

Students are feeling insecure and threatened; results revealed 89% of students agreed that they feel negative emotion when think about terror attacks carried out by TTP, 66% disagree that TTP is fighting for their rights, 91.5 % students agreed that Pakistanis are feeling insecure because of the TTP, 82% students agreed that TTP holds negative attitude toward Pakistan, 80% students disagreed that TTP is working for the betterment of the county, 79.5% disagreed on that TTP is promoting true Islamic culture, 78% of sample agreed on the complete elimination of TTP is required and 50.5% students agreed that TTP can be trusted for peace talks but the other 49.5% are either uncertain or disagree.

Those negative attitude results can be supported by the finding of the study conducted by PIPS (Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies) research shows that intense panic because of terrorism can cause dysfunctional behaviors, which commonly spread complications are stress, depression and death anxiety (Pakistan Security Report, 2009). The fear of terrorism is causing negative attitude and fear of death among students.

Terror management theory can explain this attitude . according to the theory all human behavior is motivated by the fear of our own mortality. Propose that mortality salience motives all human behaviors. Theory explains how

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people react under the threat of terrorism. It proposes that after major terror hits like 9/11, the realization of one's eventual death general in public. As the terror attacks keep occurring around the world and people focuses more on these threats fear of death increase.(Pyszczynski, T., S. Solomon, and J. Greenberg, 2003).

Findings are supported by another study conducted by Lavanco, Romano, and Milio (2008) on Terrorism's Fear. Their results pointed out that the fear of terrorism affects three areas: the cognitive, the emotional and the behavioral. This explains the negative attitude of students toward TTP in all these three areas.

Research has in fact demonstrated that when the fear of death or mortality salience, are triggered, even outside of conscious awareness - people tend to become more fearful, intolerant of difference, more socially conservative, more supportive of leaders who support their worldview, more fundamentalist, and more punitive towards those who are disrupting or who threatened to disrupt their worldview (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003).

In current situation TTP is the threat for the students, they cannot be trusted for peace talks because they always violate the seize fire, as they did on February 18, 2014 after the agreement of seize fire between government and TTP. Taliban leader Umar Khalid Khurasani announced that they killed 23 FC personals and also released there video to terrorize people. TTP is causing life threatening situations to which in reaction student are experiencing death anxiety and terrorism catastrophizing.

The results show that there are no significant differences in level of terrorism catastrophizing among male and female students. It was hypothesized that female have higher level of terrorism catastrophizing in comparison to male students. But the findings are supported by the research conducted by Nayab and Kamal (2010) that the level of terrorism catastrophizing and perceived stress was equally high among both genders. indicates that both male and female students felt high terrorism catastrophizing and high stress. Both male and female students are equally victimized by terrorist attacks; facing the threats of terror attacks equally make both genders have almost equal level of terrorism catastrophizing.

Another finding of this study is that female has higher level of death anxiety as compared to male. These findings are supported by the study conducted by Nayab and Kamal (2010) their findings shows that the female have higher level of death anxiety as compared to male students. Results are also consistent with the findings of study conducted by Roshdieh, Templer, Cannon & Canfield (1998) their Results indicates that female Iranians have higher level of death anxiety in comparison to male Iranians.

In our society the role of female in family is to look after children and other family members. Their motherly instincts and caring nature make them more anxious about death of a family member. For Pakistani women the unsafe situation of the country and the constant fear of terror attacks result in fear of harm or death of their husbands and kids who are working outside the home. This can be a reason behind the high level of death anxiety among women.

Another important finding of the study is Beaconhouse National University students have higher level of terrorism catastrophizing as compared to Gandhara University Peshawar students. The hypothesis has been rejected as it was hypothesized that level of terrorism catastrophizing is higher among Gandhara University Peshawar students as compared to BNU students. The results can be explained as BNU students have higher level of terrorism catastrophizing because Punjab receive direct threats from TTP, "All areas will come under attack but Punjab will come first.", TTP spokesperson Shaheen said (CNN , 8 November 2013). The attacks faced by Lahore are mostly the major attacks like FIA office attack on March 11, 2008, MANAWA police academy attack on October 15, 2009, ISI Punjab office attack on May 29, 2009 and many more high intensity attacks occurred in Lahore by TTP. All of these were major attacks which claimed many deaths and destruction of infrastructure and terrorized the locals, on the other hand the level of terrorism catastrophizing was low in Gandhara University Peshawar students because the exposure to the terrorism is more among them they face major and minor terror attacks both most terror attacks happened in there are more in quantity and of minor level, exposure to attacks mostly reduce their level of terrorism catastrophizing like the exposure therapy works in reduction of the fears.

Results also indicate that the level of death anxiety in Gandhra University Peshawar students is higher in comparison to BNU Lahore students. These results are in consistent with the findings of the Research conducted by Nayab and Kamal (2010) The study was based on cross-sectional research design; sample was consisting of 430 university students from university of

Peshawar, Multan, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Bahawalpur. Results indicate that the level of death anxiety was higher among Students of Peshawar University other university students. The death rate in terror attacks is high in Peshawar as compared to Lahore which explains the high level of death anxiety among Gandhara University Peshawar students, Peshawar students also face the constant fear of kidnapping target killing and over all law enforcement situation is weak there in comparison to Lahore, kidnappings and target killings make the situation worse which in result increase the level of death anxiety.

Results of the study showed that students have negative opinion toward TTP. They are facing death anxiety. Females have reported high level of death anxiety and also the students from Peshawar. They experience a constant fear of death. Experiencing tragic events , Listening about it and seeing deaths on media makes it worse. Students also experience terrorism catastrophizing. Students from Lahore reported higher level of terrorism catastrophizing. They are facing major terror attacks. The media telecasting attacks and threats of terror attacks makes situation more fearful for young generation. These constant fears can lead toward psychological problems, which to some extent students are experiencing in the form of depression, anxiety and feelings of insecurity.

Limitations and Suggestions:

It was a small scale study. Increased sample size would have helped to generalize the results. Sample was only taken from two universities of Lahore and Peshawar, data sampling from other universities from other

major cities of Pakistan like Quetta and Karachi can help to find more interesting results and also in the generalization of the results. For the opinion about TTP a questionnaire was used. An interview along with the questionnaire would have helped to have more detailed opinions of students.

Implications of the Findings:

Despite being a small scale study, the findings have important implications for the psychological well being of the students who are facing terrorism as a constant threat. The opinion about TTP is clear. They want complete elimination of TTP despite having a positive and a negative opinion about TTP in country. Secondly, students in Lahore have high level of terrorism catastrophizing. This can lead toward serious psychological problems. Students from Peshawar also reported terrorism catastrophizing but the level of death anxiety is higher among them. Having a constant fear of death can affect and disrupt their daily routines. Authorities should take some serious steps in making environment more secure and providing proper psychological facilities in all educational institutes. This way students can deal with their terrorism catastrophizing and death anxiety and able to focus on their future and tasks. These students are the future of the country. If they are facing insecurities and death threats, they won't be able to give country a bright future.