

## Effect of Peace Interventions on Students' Peacebuilding Attitudes at Secondary School Level

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### Abstract

It is the need of the hour to incorporate peace promotion as one of the significant features of the educational institutions in Pakistan. The present study explores the impact of a peace promotion intervention, with control and experimental groups, in order to understand if specific planned activities can significantly improve the peace-building attitudes of students. The study is experimental in nature, administering a pre-test and a post-test for both the control and experimental groups. Two equal samples (n=69) of 10th-grade (secondary school) students were selected — using a random sampling technique — for the control and experimental groups. The results of this study indicated that peace interventions — comprising games, hands-on activities, and dialogues — contributed significantly to improving the peace-building attitudes of the students in the experimental group. In addition, the female students of the experimental group exhibited a greater improvement in their peace-building attitudes in the post-test phase as compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, the study also reveals that the female students in the control group also depicted improvement in the post-test. This research presents implications for policymakers and educationists that need to be considered when introducing peace promotion activities into the (secondary) school curriculum. This article argues that practical activities — targeted to inculcate peaceful behavior in the students — can serve as important tools in establishing an environment of peace in society in general.

### Keywords

Peacebuilding, peace education, Pakistan, tolerance, violent extremism

### Introduction

Many of the South Asian countries are experiencing violence and extremism. Pakistan has also been exposed to the threat of violent extremism and terrorism, whether in the form of religious militancy, ethnic conflict, or cross-border militancy or terrorism. In

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addition to taking into account many structural determinants of violent extremism or terrorism (see e.g., Makki & Iftikhar, 2021), the level of interaction and integration at the micro-societal level (cross-cultural, inter-religious, and inter-sectarian) are equally important to be considered. Following the incidents of 9/11, the international community started to provide substantial financial support for education, particularly in countries (perceived to be) associated with radicalization, violent extremism, and terrorism. The rationale behind such an approach was that extremism is progressively being seen as a *function* of social and political marginalization rather than of (economic) poverty. It is widely known that divided societies are fertile grounds for spreading intolerance and hatred against the professed 'others'. In such circumstances, education is perceived as an essential tool for overcoming prejudice, abhorrence, and discrimination by endorsing tolerance and inclusivity (Adams, 2000; Boulding, 2000; Zahab & Roy, 2004). Hence, education-based interventions contribute to establishing and maintaining lasting peace in societies.

According to Gawerc (2006), 'peace' is a contested term and is mainly viewed as the *absence* of physical violence. Galtung (1975) has dwelled on different terms and concepts used to describe (peace-related) conditions to be considered for realizing harmony in society; these include peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. The main focus of peacebuilding has been multi-dimensional. It includes aspects related to social, psychological, and economic environments. Therefore, incorporating various thematic activities, such as justice, equity, and cooperation, addresses the fundamental causes of (violent) extremism. Moreover, peacebuilding is a dynamic process that can play a pivotal role during a violent conflict (the intrastate conflicts in particular).

According to the social learning theory, whatever is 'observed' or 'perceived' is found to 'develop' acceptance in the minds of individuals (Williams, 2004). Several scholars have also explored the role of media as significantly contributing towards *acceptance*. This is equally applicable to children who also 'perceive' and 'develop' conceptions of violence, based on what they observe through different sources (Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009; Begum, 2012). Thus, this leads to a need to teach peace-building from a younger age through various methods and actors (e.g., family, society, and school).

In view of the above, Agius and Ambrosewicz (2003) believe that it is the responsibility of the present generation to bequeath the coming generations sustainable peace. Peace education or related intervention is essential in this regard. It is understood as a process that encompasses skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and conflict resolution. It also inculcates non-violent means, empathy, and respect for humanity (Harris, 2002). Hence, children, young individuals, and adults must be exposed to the notion of 'peace' and how to defuse or react towards any emerging (violent) conflict and/or related situation(s). Moreover, the focus should also be to recognize the *actions* resulting in violence (e.g., Brauneis, 2019). Therefore, there is a need to encourage peacebuilding in developing attitudes of children and youth. The United Nations has called on each country "[...] to ensure that children from the very early age receive educational benefits so that they can resolve any dispute peacefully and with respect for human dignity and tolerance" (as cited in Işoraitè, 2019, p. 44-45).

Peacebuilding can be promoted through various strategies. In doing so, education (and related intervention) is the most practical strategy that directly contributes to minimizing violence in the future. Inculcating peace through education

subsequently means having a more stable and peaceful culture that ensures a low level of violence. It may also lessen the *need* to have structured programs focusing on peace activities for the members or segments of the society (Işoraité, 2019; Willis, 2000). It has been well observed that several countries have attempted to improve the school environment to develop a culture of justice by devising a curriculum that implicitly or explicitly targets peace-building attitudes. Peace promotion is also carried out through interventions such as the ones pertaining to upholding children's rights, discipline-inducing strategies, and organization of school and classrooms. For example, Liberia has introduced a program for youth — known as 'conflict managers' through which they have reformed the curricula; by incorporating activities related to communication, cooperation and problem-solving, poems and stories on peace-building, and community service (Adebajo, 2002). Likewise, Agarwal (2011) has stressed the importance of values in teaching peace and harmony to build a society that reflects shared values, essential freedom, and peace. Different social issues have also been examined thoroughly in studies on 'Education for peace', where the key aim is to develop a society marked by responsible citizenship both at a societal and global level (e.g., Damirchi & Bilge, 2014; Harber & Sakade, 2009; Harris, 2004).

In addition to the above, it is essential to recognize the difference between 'education *for* peace' and 'education *about* peace'. Different peace-building campaigns at the school level, such as West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP), have addressed the difference. 'Education for peace' aims to improve peaceful relations, whereas 'education about peace' intends to cultivate awareness regarding peace and conflict. Nevertheless, the objective is also to introduce the concept of conflict management.

Recently, scholars have approached the relationship between 'education' and 'peace' from a new perspective. The view considers 'education for peace' as an integral element to develop a new educational repertoire. Such an educational regime will be able to make the world safer, improved, and more just. Furthermore, studies have examined the different strategies to handle conflicts through education. These strategies are primarily concerned with *managing* a conflicting situation, respecting autonomy (both in thoughts and actions), and aiming for short- and long-term consequences (in thinking and practice; see, e.g., Gearon, 2015; Gross, 2017).

### **Context of the Study**

Pakistan is facing constant challenges in different spheres of life, among which the most common are terrorism, violent extremism, and political instability. It is argued that the prevalence of extremist ideas among young adults (from different regions of Pakistan) significantly contributes to the manifestation of the phenomena mentioned above (e.g., Begum, 2012). Disagreements have also existed on the terms such as 'dialogue' which is often perceived as an aggressive *act* rather than a negotiation process. Similarly, in some cases, religious beliefs have resulted in extremism at the university level. Therefore, the academicians felt a dire need for 'peace education' as an integral part of the educational system of Pakistan. Considering the developmental aspect, all types of such perspectives are shaped by the experiences one receives in school, home, and the community. Hence, to alter these perceptions, efforts to develop a peace-building attitude at a younger age are warranted (Azhar & Hassan, 2014).

In addition, the phenomenon of radicalization has also affected the educational institutions — i.e., 'on-campus'. One of the most prominent examples is

the lynching of a university student Mishal Khan, accused of blasphemy. The targeted killings of university teachers have also been observed; e.g., the murders of Ashfaq Ahmed (in Lahore), Ajmal Khan (Vice-chancellor of Islamia College University, Peshawar), and Amanullah Achakzai (Principal of the University Law College, Quetta; see e.g., Dawn, 2018).

It is important to mention that Pakistan has three types of educational systems: public, private, and Madrassa (religious seminaries). The students passing out from these systems possess different ideologies (or worldviews) developed through distinct streams. Hence, society experiences continuing discrimination towards the ethno-religious minorities because of having varied value/belief systems. According to Ahmed (2018), in such a situation, peace education is the only way to develop *resilience* in the coming generations. Furthermore, it has the potential to create a greater acceptance for religious, cultural, or ethnic differences. Therefore, the need to have peace education is not only limited to the Madrassa stream but is also to be considered in public and private school systems (Bashir and Akbar, 2019; Iqbal, 2016; Khan, 2017).

Ahmed (2017) has reviewed the literature on peace-building initiatives taken in Pakistani schools, targeting both the students and teachers. The report discusses that the students acknowledged being exposed to violence at home, school, and the community. Both the students and teachers accepted the worth of peace intervention programs in decreasing the stereotypical views held towards 'others'. He further highlights that it is important to develop peace education programs that are context-relevant. The report further recommended having peace education programs that are more participatory and include peace education in the curricula of schools. Also, Hamayun and colleagues (2014), for the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, examined the effectiveness of conflict management in the students of public and private universities. They found out that the approaches towards management vary depending upon the nature of the educational institutions (Hamayun et al., 2014; see also Rahim, 2002).

Iqbal (2005) has reported limited small-scale initiatives associated with the education of 'human rights' in Pakistan. He asserted that though private sector enterprises were working on 'peace' and 'human rights' education programmes throughout the country, there was no systematic and long-term initiative by the public sector education system. Regarding the peace-building attitudes of the students, Nayyar and Salim (2003) have conducted a rigorous investigation of the lessons imparted through the school curriculum in Pakistan. They have concluded that the education system, in the guise of education, inculcates adverse approaches in the students against the religious minorities (such as Hindus and Christians). Another critical aspect was emphasized by Ahmed (2007), who believes that the education system has no contribution towards creating more room for diversity and co-existence despite the different social groups sharing the same (physical) space. Khalid and Mehmood (2013) explicate tolerance as an essential element to be promoted and practised in/between different social entities and organizations to attain a peaceful environment throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, tolerance is accepted as the foundation of democracy and human rights, and intolerant attitudes in multi-ethnic, multi-religious, or multi-cultural societies lead to desecration of human rights, ferocity, or fortified conflict (UNESCO, 1995).

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<sup>5</sup> According to Khalid and Mehmood (2013), *tolerance* is nurtured by knowledge, openness, communication, freedom of thought, ethics, and belief.

In view of the above, the present study investigates the effective strategies of promoting peace and harmony in a cooperative environment. The study targeted 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students as the age group reflects the identity construction and negotiation-related aspects and the ones belonging to this age group are (more) inquisitive to learning. Teaching children (and adolescents) about ‘peace’ as a construct allows them to practice it in broader society — in relational terms; hence, creating a ripple effect. This study employs an experimental approach while engaging students in peace-building processes to explore their impacts. It compares the variation in peace-building attitudes between the students from the ‘experimental and control group’ with an intervention of peace-building strategies for the experimental group. This research attempts to test the following hypotheses:

- *Ho1*: There is no significant mean score difference in students’ peace-building attitudes between the control and experimental groups on the composite peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.
- *Ho2*: There is no significant mean score difference in students’ peace-building attitudes between the control and experimental groups on the subscales of the peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.
- *Ho3*: There is no significant mean score difference between male and female students’ peace-building attitudes of the control and experimental groups on the composite peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.

The reason to consider the gender differences in terms of peace-building attitudes in the study is that females are mostly more sympathetic and tolerant than their male counterparts. From a societal perspective, females are the future mothers and will bear the major burden of inculcating values in future generations. On the other hand, males are expected to show their tolerance in everyday life activities. Hence, both share the same responsibility to raise more peaceful generations (Rogan, 2016). This research, employing a variety of peace interventions to bring about change in attitudes towards peace-building, attempts to study the effects of these interventions and their potential role in peace education in Pakistan. This study also draws attention to the use of digital interventions to examine the impact on the peace-building attitudes of the students. The succeeding part of the article sheds light on the literature on peace education, followed by the research methods employed for this study. The paper then presents the analysis of the data gathered and the conclusion.

## Literature Review

The construct of ‘peace’ is highly personal and tends to have a different interpretation for different individuals (Barash & Webel, 2002). Like many other expressions (such as happiness and justice), peace is hard to describe and may only be recognized in its absence (Webel, 2004).<sup>6</sup> Danesh (2006) has proposed an integrative theory of peace education to develop a peace curriculum. According to this perspective, peace is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept having a psychological, social, political, ethical, and spiritual state. All these dimensions are expressed through human interactions at various levels; based on the notion that conceptions of one’s self,

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<sup>6</sup> This study is primarily based on ‘peace education’, therefore, a detailed discussion over the problematization of ‘peace’ (as explored by Elise Boulding, Johan Galtung and Birgit Brock-Utne) is beyond the scope of this study (see e.g., Barash & Webel, 2002).

world, and peace are all based on one's worldview. Therefore, *creating* peace through education would need four prerequisites; encompassing unity-based worldview, culture of healing, culture of peace, and peace-oriented curriculum. These skills, taught through education, would help the learners learn how to feel peaceful within their own selves and with others.

Peace education in Pakistan attracted much attention following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, which led to an unexpected change in worldwide geopolitics. Since 2001, the global community has dedicated more significant consideration to supporting access to quality education that shapes *resilience* to extremism and/or radical beliefs (Ahmed, 2018). We have also observed the emergence of soft measures adopted by several conflict-ridden countries to counter the menace — often known as *preventing* radicalization or violent extremism (Ahmed, 2009).

In the context of Pakistan, peace education is needed to allow students and teachers to become aware of extremist beliefs and the ways to counter them. Therefore, it can be argued that peace education provides a support mechanism to identify alternatives to radicalization, based on reasoned and humane values. With regards, several Pakistan-based Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in highlighting the need for peace education from several thematic foci; such as conflict management, human rights, women emancipation in Islam, interfaith harmony, and equality (Ahmed, 2018; Asia Pacific Human Rights Information Centre, 2000; Bhatti, 2010; Iqbal, 2005).

Nevertheless, the concept of peace through education is still at an early developing stage. The peace-promoting process struggles for methods of behavior management, discussion, and teamwork, primarily because students' experiences (at both home and school) have not been conducive to a reflected awareness of a peaceful environment and what it can achieve. Autesserre (2010) has reported that flexible counselling and a suitable method to peacebuilding needs a recognition that violence is unacceptable. This points to attitude change amongst students guided by teachers and tutors to practice inter-personal problem-solving.

Regarding the promotion of peace-building attitudes, the application of modern technology plays a significant role. E-learning is becoming the most common source of providing peace education. It offers many platforms for the teachers to execute pedagogical activities through video clips, games, peace applications, peace documentaries and movies (e.g., Yusuf, 2005). The use of modern technology opens students' perceptions of what is possible and what can be achieved in peacebuilding *within* the classroom. The educational institutes increasingly use the devices equipped with modern technology as it helps the teacher in creating an effective learning environment under the objectives of the particular course on peace education. Nwabueze and Obaro (2011) have pointed out that modern technology introduces *objectivity* in the content that subsequently attracts students.

Owing to the mentioned advancements, the classroom environments have significantly improved, and the interaction between different groups allows the students to better understand each other (Ayer, 2015; Peace Training, 2020). Social media and digital games have the potential for attitude changing learning, but — with a skilful teacher — they could provide innovative means to the conflicting parties *within* a classroom to re-think and re-plan a peaceful future together. Furthermore, 'online' dialogue permits individuals to resolve a conflict and interact with each other; avoiding physical constraints. It has been stated that "Dialogical space refers to a room in one's thoughts to entertain multiple ideas, beliefs and opinions. It is



essential to the development of a generative process that promotes a fluid, shifting ideas and actions” (Anderson, 1997, p. 112, as cited in Aguilar, 2018). Dialogic preparation is, thus, a conversation that allows the conception of new understandings that bring about change in the life of people as well as result in new choices for networking and addressing the conflicts. Peace dialogues within this mental space can produce transformation among students and help to establish an environment where different beliefs and values are accommodated and respected (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1991; Galtung, 2008).

Peace games (i.e., sports or physical activities) provide yet another interesting means of providing students with the opportunity to share a common experience of being in situations that require the eradication of violence. These games serve as moral resources for understanding and building a peaceful environment. By promoting responsible citizenship attitudes, peace games set up a content of communication, allow collaboration, and establish the procedures of non-violent conflict resolution (Kamperidou, 2008). Different peacemaking activities use various resources to promote and develop students’ attitudes towards managing and preventing conflicts.

**Method**

A pre-test and post-test for the control and experimental groups were used in this study. The sample for the survey comprised secondary school students studying in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade (the academic year 2019-20) in a government school located in one of the metropolitan cities. The school is among the most prominent government schools in the city and has an almost equal strength of male and female students. Another reason for selecting this school for the study was its accessibility for the researchers. The researchers first took permission from the school authority to recruit the students in the study, followed by formal research ethics approval. Four 10<sup>th</sup>-grade classes (N=138) were selected for the purpose. The students enrolled in the four sections that participated in the study were distributed randomly into experimental and control groups. The experimental group (n=69) was exposed to the intervention — they received peace promotion interventions; the control group (n=69) did not receive any intervention.

**Table 1.** Demographic Distribution of Experimental and Control Groups

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Experimental group	69	34	35
Control group	69	32	37
Total	138	66	72

**Instruments**

A Peace Promotion scale was developed based on the existing literature. The scale items were selected from the ones found most relevant to the context of the study; these were primarily related to conflict management. At the first phase of the study, the demographic information of the students sampled for this research was gathered through a demographic information sheet. Later they were requested to participate in the survey questionnaire. The survey items were finalized after pilot testing on a sample (N=50) of 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students to check respondents’ ability. The overall

Cronbach's Alpha of the composite scale was 0.87 for the 28 items. The details of the questionnaire are given in the succeeding part.

### ***Conflict Management Formative Questionnaire***

The scale, developed by Noonan and Erickson (2018), consists of 21 items, which are to be recorded on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from 'Not very like me' to 'Very like me'. This scale is primarily concerned with the conflict management and conflict resolution tendencies of individuals; for example, the approach that "I can think of several different ways to deal with a disagreement". For the current study, nine items were selected from this scale, and Cronbach's alpha was recorded at 0.75 which was deemed satisfactory for this conflict management subscale.

### ***Human Rights questionnaire***

The scale was developed by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (2017). This questionnaire consists of 13 items based on Likert type four-point scale ranging from 'Agree' to 'Not applicable'. This scale measured the attitudes/tendencies to uphold human rights, such as "I would have a higher chance of success if I were right". Six items were selected from this scale for this study. The Cronbach's alpha for the human rights subscale was 0.72, showing its relevance to the sample (for details, see George & Mallery, 2003).

### ***Attitudes Towards Peace and War***

The scale, developed by Bizumic and colleagues (2013), contains 16 items; measuring attitudes towards peace and war. For this study, eight items were selected for the peace subscale. This (sub)scale was a Likert type scale, with responses ranging from 'Agree' to 'Disagree'. This scale measured the tendencies of peace promotion: for example, "war is sometimes the best way to solve a conflict". Cronbach's alpha was 0.73 for the eight items selected from the scale.

### ***Interpersonal Tolerance Scale***

This scale was developed by Thomae and colleagues (2016) to measure the level of interpersonal tolerance. This was a Likert type seven-point scale, with 25 items ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. An example of the items is, "I tend to ignore other people's opinions, values and beliefs if I don't understand them". The Cronbach's alpha for the five items chosen from the mentioned scale was recorded as 0.73.

## **Interventions**

The researchers used different peace promotion interventions — based on *keeping*, *making*, and *building* peace — for a period of six months. The peace interventions were implemented as co-curricular activities in the school only for the experimental group. These peace promotion interventions included:

- *Digital Storytelling*: The researchers presented different stories in the classroom about peacebuilding (illustrated talks). The stories were based on components of peacebuilding such as justice, conflict resolution, cooperation, and human rights. These stories were taken from the different websites presenting the content of peace promotion in the society.
- *Video Clips*: The videos, based on the peace promotion activities, were presented to the students. The concepts of justice, cooperation, human rights, and conflict



resolution were particularly addressed in these videos, with the message of how to avoid and manage conflicting situations with others. Students were also asked to design and implement the concepts of conflict resolution through hands-on activities and present their work in groups.

- *Peace Games:* Puzzle games were also used as a peace-building strategy. The students solved and explained the puzzles while working in different group stations and accepting the opinions of each other. These games, designed by a Boston-based NGO — the Seeds of Peace (Seeds of Peace, 2008) — were executed through USAID-supported workshops to make ‘Peaceable Schools’ with a greater purpose to inculcate cooperation and unity.
- *Peace Documentaries:* Peace documentaries, based on War and Peace, were also shown to the students to familiarize them with the essence of peace and harmony in society. The students were also given tasks regarding their role, as responsible citizens, in society, in view of respect, cooperation, and tolerance for each other.
- *Peace Dialogues:* Students were given a dialogue situation to overcome extremist positions taken by different sects. They were asked to prepare their talks concerning minority rights.
- *Peace through Social Media:* Students were also asked to share the social media sources where they can post messages of peace and harmony and guide others to promote the message of a peaceful society. For this purpose, the students used different social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, Peace Blog, and LinkedIn.
- *Peace Messages Tags:* During the session, students were shown how to create peace messages and display these messages through different activities — reflecting a peaceful community. The messages incorporated the concepts of tolerance, valuing others, sympathy, and helping others by joining hands together.
- *Peace Walk:* Peace walks, themed ‘Voice of Peace’, were organized for spreading the messages of peace among different segments of the society. The purpose was to inculcate the idea among the students that all religions, cultures, and ethnicities are equally respectable.
- *Peace Lectures:* Lectures on peace were also delivered to students, and a seminar on interfaith harmony was arranged. Students also made drawings and paintings exhibiting the concept of interfaith harmony.
- *Role Play:* For this intervention, the students were given role play content and were advised on how to *play* those roles. The role-play topics included minority and majority rights in Pakistan, discouraging hate speech, right to equity, freedom of expression, raising voice against exploitation, freedom to practise religion and culture, right to education, and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

## Procedure

This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of a peace promotion intervention on the conflict management, human rights, peace, and tolerance traits of the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. This study was carried out after getting approvals from the ethics committee and fulfilling the permission protocols to collect data. It was ensured that there would be no human harm in executing the peace promotion activities for the experimental group. Considering the significance of peace-building attitudes of students, different Pakistani NGOs are working on peace education in different schools. The researchers purposefully selected the school that had no prior history of peace interventions.

The researchers designed the peace promotion intervention in consultation with the peace instructors and experts on promoting peace-building attitudes. It was a six-month peace-building plan with 24 sessions (one-hour session per week) executed for the experimental group. The ultimate aim of the peace interventions was to develop a pacification/behavior management/anger management approach to address conflicts.

In each session, the previous knowledge imparted on peacebuilding was determined through different tasks and dialogues in the class with the volunteer students. No peace intervention was delivered to the students in the ‘control group’. The interventions mainly focused on challenging social issues, such as racism, caste/social class discrimination, interreligious prejudice, and gender inequality in the local context.

The peace-building attitudes scale was administered to the control and experimental groups, in their classrooms, at both pre and post-test. The respondents completed the survey questionnaire one week before starting the peace interventions (i.e., pre-test) and one week after the interventions concluded (post-test). The respondents were assured of their anonymity in participating in this study and the confidentiality of their responses.

**Table 2.** Mean score and standard deviation for both the experimental and control group on peace promotion scale

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>		<i>Post-test</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Peace Promotion scale</i>								
	Control	69	22.55	2.55	25.08	5.25	.253	0.80
	Experimental	69	22.53	4.16	33.00	6.94	-7.55	.000***L

*Df=136, L=large effect size*

A paired sample *t-test* was administered to evaluate the impact of the intervention on the peace-building attitudes of the students on the peace promotion scale. There was a statistically significant improvement in the peace-building attitudes of the students in the experimental group (M=33.00, SD=6.94),  $t(136) = -7.55$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed). The eta squared statistic (1.28) indicated a large effect size, with 7.92 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test.

**Table 3.** Mean score and Standard deviation of pre-test and post-test of the control group on the subscales of peace promotion scale (N=69)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>		<i>Post-test</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Conflict management	30.97	6.00	27.36	8.10	2.88	0.00**m
Human rights	19.01	4.63	20.56	10.39	-1.14	0.25
Peace	22.23	4.23	21.17	7.58	1.14	0.25
Tolerance	17.53	3.22	18.01	10.81	-.385	0.70

*Df=68, M =Medium effect size*

There was a statistically significant decrease in the peace-building attitudes of the control group (M=27.36, SD=8.10),  $t(69) = 2.88$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on the conflict management subscale. The eta squared statistic (0.50) indicated a medium effect size with 3.61 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test. However, no significant differences were found for the control group on other subscales of the peace promotion scale.

**Table 4.** Mean score and Standard deviation of pre-test and post-test of the experimental group on the subscales of peace promotion scale (N=69)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>		<i>Post-test</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Conflict management	27.95	10.43	37.36	4.78	-6.83	.000***L
Human rights	20.17	4.09	29.43	12.43	-6.18	.000***L
Peace	24.43	5.98	30.73	10.99	-4.61	.000***L
Tolerance	17.59	4.92	33.02	11.65	-10.05	.000***L

*Df=68, L= Large effect size*

On the other hand, there was a statistically significant increase in the peace-building attitudes of the students in the experimental group (M=33.36, SD=4.78),  $t(69) = -6.83$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on the conflict management subscale. The eta squared statistic (1.6) indicated a large effect size with 9.41 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test.

There was a statistically significant increase in peace-building attitudes of the experimental group (M=29.43, SD=12.43),  $t(69) = -6.18$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on the human rights subscale. The eta squared statistic (1.0) indicated a large effect size with 9.26 mean scores differences between pre-test and post-test.

There was a statistically significant increase in peace-building attitudes of the experimental group (M=30.73, SD=10.99),  $t(69) = -4.61$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on the peace subscale. The eta squared statistic (0.71) indicated a large effect size with 6.00 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test. In addition, a statistically significant increase was observed in peace-building attitudes of the experimental group (M=33.02, SD=11.65),  $t(69) = -10.05$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on the tolerance subscale. The eta squared statistic (1.72) indicated a large effect size with 15.43 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test.

**Table 5.** Mean score and Standard deviation of pre-test and post-test of the control and experimental gender on the composite peace promotion scale

<i>Group</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>		<i>Post-test</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
			<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Control	Male	34	20.85	1.85	18.20	8.88	1.28	0.20
	Female	35	22.03	3.15	25.79	5.80	-4.25	0.000***L
Experimental	Male	34	23.47	3.76	35.27	6.39	1.88	0.000***
	Female	35	21.62	4.36	30.80	6.83	2.80	0.007**L

*Df=67, L= Large Effect size*

An independent sample t-test was administered to evaluate the impact of the intervention on the peace-building attitudes of the male and female students on the peace promotion scale. There was a statistically significant increase in the peace-building attitudes of the female students (M=25.79, SD=5.80),  $t(35) = -4.25$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) in the control group on peace promotion scale. The eta squared statistic (1.23) indicated a large effect size with 3.76 mean scores differences between the pre-test and post-test.

There was a statistically significant increase in the peace-building attitudes of the male students in the experimental group ( $M=35.27$ ,  $SD=6.39$ ),  $t(35) = 1.88$ , and  $p < .000$  (two-tailed) on peace promotion scale. The eta squared statistic (1.19) indicated a large effect size with 11.8 gain scores differences between the pre-test and post-test. There was a statistically significant increase in the peace-building attitudes of the female students in the experimental group ( $M=30.80$ ,  $SD=6.83$ ),  $t(35) = 2.80$ , and  $p < .007$  (two-tailed) on the peace promotion scale. The eta squared statistic (1.57) indicated a large effect size with 9.18 gain scores differences between the pre-test and post-test.

## Discussion

The current study was conducted to determine the impact of peace intervention for fostering peace-building attitudes in secondary school students. The findings indicated that the peace interventions effectively improved the conflict resolution, human rights, peace, and tolerance promotion attitudes in the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. The following text discusses each hypothesis separately.

***Ho1:** There is no significant mean score difference in students' peace-building attitudes between the control and experimental groups on the composite peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.*

The results from Table 2 indicate that the first hypothesis can be rejected; there was a significant difference between the experimental and control group on the composite peace promotion scale. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be deduced that peace interventions had a substantial influence on the peace-building attitudes of the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. This finding is consistent with the research study of Galtung (1996), who found that the students showed positive response over peace education in the class to learn and deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner.

***Ho2:** There is no significant mean score difference in students' peace-building attitudes between the control and experimental groups on the subscales of the peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.*

Tables 3 and 4, presenting the data used to test the second hypothesis, indicate that the conflict management, human rights, peace, and tolerance scores of the students improved significantly in the experimental group after administering the peace promotion interventions. The second hypothesis is, thus, rejected. It is concluded that the peace interventions significantly contribute to promoting the peace-building attitudes of students. Similar findings can be traced from the works of Danesh (2006), Kadivar (2007), and Spears (2004). It is recognized that promoting a peace culture leads to increased tolerance and the recognition of 'other'. It also cultivates desirable values such as open-mindedness, respecting others, and non-violence.

***Ho3:** There is no significant mean score difference between male and female students' peace-building attitudes of the control and experimental groups on the composite peace promotion scale at pre-test and post-test.*

As displayed in Table 5, this third hypothesis is rejected as there are significant gender effects in the peace-building attitudes. In the experimental group, both the male and female students are recorded to have gained more than one standard deviation with a large effect size. Although not taking an active part in the peace-

building intervention, the female students from the control group also show a significant gain, which may be explained through the 'Hawthorne Effect' of partial participation in a research project (Shipman, 1972). Hawthorne effect is a term used to describe that people would work harder when being part of some experiment (i.e., study) even without any treatment. Applying this concept to this particular study, it can be argued that the students in the control group were aware of their participation in the experiment and its nature. Thus, despite being in the control group, they had undergone some changes in their attitudes, resulting in the significant difference recorded in the 'post-test'.

The male students in the control group remained unaffected by the project, and the significant fall in scores was possibly a measure of their lack of interest in being asked to repeat the attitude measure. Studies suggest that boys have more significant tendencies of aggression and violence during their teenage, particularly the later years of the teenage (Loeber & Hay, 1997; Sampson, Morenoff & Raudenbush, 2005; Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Loeber, 2000). This can be the reason for the relatively lesser score of boys on the peace-building attitude scales in the control group. The same can be argued for the male students in the experimental group, whose peace-building attitudes were affected because of the peace interventions.

The above also suggests that the females in Pakistan have a greater awareness of their surrounding environment, even when they are not directly involved (see also Pell, Iqbal & Sohail, 2010). Moreover, Byrne and colleagues (1996) have reported that females generally play a dynamic and central role in peacebuilding while the male segment of the population usually tends to take up the recognized roles in peacebuilding. This is perhaps the reason that the males dominate as peacekeepers, peace representatives, and statesmen and office-bearers. It is also observed that most females do not have an expression of speech in indigenous and nationwide decision-making processes. The results presented in Table 5 depict that the female students are relatively more receptive to peace-building attitudes than their male counterparts.

## Conclusion

This study has exhibited that the peace interventions administered on the secondary school students had significant positive effects on the peace-building attitudes of the students. Based on the findings of this study, it can be argued that peace-building intervention(s) can serve as central activities to inculcate positive attitudes towards conflict management, interpersonal relationships, human rights, and inclusivity. Therefore, the scope of the existing school curriculum should be expanded to incorporate a course on peace education. The teacher-training curriculum should also include *teaching* peace in the classrooms.

The present study was conducted on a small sample to determine the effect of peace-building intervention on the attitudes of the students. But an investigation on an extensive sample is important to assess the generalizability of the results and further evaluate the effect of such activities. Similarly, this study was carried out in an urban public school located in one of the developed districts of Pakistan. However, the studies carried out in any school in the rural region may yield different results. Additionally, this study was confined to the students of 10<sup>th</sup>-grade; hence, indepth analyses are required also at the elementary level to target behavior change at an early age.

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