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**Willing but Unprepared: Prospective Teachers' Beliefs about Peaceful Coexistence and the Structural Gaps in Pakistani Teacher Education**

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**Abstract**

*Teacher education programmes in Pakistan anticipate that prospective teachers will arrive with a commitment to peaceful coexistence; however, these programmes are unable to facilitate them in applying this belief within the classroom setting. The present study is based on a qualitative study that revealed the beliefs of fourteen prospective teachers towards the pedagogic approaches of 'peaceful coexistence' and 'collaborative learning' at a Women University in Sialkot, Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews of participants produced the data, and thematic analysis informed by a reflexive process was used to analyse the data. Four themes were developed: peaceful coexistence as an active moral practice, collaborative learning as a gap-filling relational bridge, the difference between belief and readiness for practice, and teacher education as an unprepared ground. The prospective teachers are motivationally and conceptually ready to do peace-oriented and collaborative teaching, but the structure is not ready to do it. It reframes the problem of teacher education with respect to attitudes as a case of deprofessionalisation, which has important consequences for embedding change in teacher education curricula and changes in practicum and teacher education policy in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** *Prospective Teachers, Peaceful Coexistence, Collaborative Learning, Teacher Education, Pakistan, Reflexive Thematic Analysis, Teacher Beliefs*

**Introduction**

There is a paradox in the teacher education system of Pakistan. There is very little evidence available on teachers' prospective conceptions of inclusive, peace-oriented, and collaborative classrooms, despite the clear policy orientations of national policy documents. This is not an abstraction but has a dramatic impact on the implications of programmes: policy values are communicated to students who already embrace these values, yet the same students are not prepared to put these values to the test. Therefore, prospective teachers entering the programmes are not a side issue but a prerequisite for the design of the programmes.

Teacher beliefs draw on a substantial body of research that has confirmed that teacher beliefs are resilient cognitive schemata (Pajares, 1992). As prospective teachers, they enter university with their own meaning systems formed through observation, experience, and socialisation as learners (Lortie, 1975). These belief systems are resistant to change

through coursework alone, and their relationship to classroom practice is significant: what one does in one's classes is indicative of one's beliefs (Pajares, 1992). However, in the context of Pakistan, there is a dearth of direct and systematic studies on the content of pre-service teachers' beliefs about peace (Amber, 2021; Jamal & Kiran, 2023).

The teacher education system in Pakistan is complex in terms of the policy surrounding it. The National and State professional standards (National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPSTs) and the National Education Policy 2009) clearly include peace and tolerance, social cohesion, and collective engagement as professional expectations (Khizar et al., 2019). However, there has been recurring evidence of a policy-practice gap in research on the practice of social studies policy (Amber, 2021). In terms of issues related to teacher preparation at the provincial level, Punjab has the most teacher training institutions and the most teacher enrolment in pre-service programs in Pakistan, and is thus a key area to explore in relation to teacher preparation and how teacher preparation policy objectives are experienced (or not experienced) in this province.

A reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) study was conducted at GCWU Sialkot to address three research questions; this paper depends on the results from that study.

What beliefs do prospective teachers hold about peaceful coexistence in an educational context?

What are their attitudes towards collaborative learning as a means of promoting coexistence?

What the implications are of those beliefs for teacher education policy frameworks?

The views of fourteen prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed, BS Education, and M.Phil Education programmes provide answers to the above questions. The paper covers the thematic literature review, methodological account, presentation and interpretation of the findings, and a discussion of implications for policy and practice.

## **Literature Review**

### **Teacher's Beliefs as Pedagogical Filters**

Teacher beliefs have a sophisticated theoretical underpinning, with Pajares (1992) stating that beliefs are the most powerful predictor of teachers' behaviour and filters that new knowledge is funnelled through. Importantly, these beliefs are ingrained even before teacher preparation training starts, and therefore, not changed easily through courses alone, as found by , who allows that these beliefs are only changed as a result of sustained, active, and experiential engagement; otherwise, the effect of a course amounts to propositional knowledge and superficial accumulation of the professional discourse. This alignment has significant implications for programme design: when teacher educators assume that policy values will be taken on when taught, they routinely underestimate the challenge that they present to themselves (Lortie, 1975).

Pakistani studies in recent years confirm this alarming factor. Research revealed that prospective teachers come with traditional (transmission-oriented) belief orientations into the B.Ed. programme, which gradually changes while conducting regular teaching practice in actual classrooms; merely doing the coursework was not enough to change the belief orientations of prospective teachers (Dayan, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022). The results of this study provide evidence that the gap between belief and competence is not closed automatically but is mediated by practical experiences, which are not captured by formal teaching. The relevance for teacher education programmes is profound: a disconnect between beliefs and practice will persist regardless of how well-intentioned a teacher education programme may be, unless it is structured into settings where prospective teachers can experience engaging in reflexive practices and receive scaffolding for this.

### **Peaceful Co-existence in Educational Contexts**

Peace education studies have long made the distinction between negative peace, which moves away from the foregoing war, and positive peace, which is reached by fostering empathy, respect, justice, and positive social relationships (Cairns, 2011; Harris, 2004). There is broad agreement that peaceful coexistence is not a default mode of school but needs to be planned for and achieved through pedagogical work. Teachers are not neutral carriers of content but are active scaffolds and builders of the social and relationship climate in which learning takes place. This vision sees peaceful coexistence as an educational endeavour.

Yet, peace education has attracted increasing scholarly attention in Pakistan, where the evidence base is inconsistent. Although many studies have been conducted on the attitudes of prospective teachers in survey contexts, it has been found that peace education fields generally receive positive attitudes from prospective teachers, while the questions of peace remain unattended in the teacher education programmes in general in the Punjab context (Jamal & Kiran, 2023). A study on peace education in the classrooms of Punjab's secondary schools revealed that not all peace values are given due consideration in the classroom, and that the enactment of a peace-oriented pedagogy is largely reliant on teachers' dispositions (Amber, 2021). A detailed study was also conducted on the Pakistan Studies curriculum, which revealed significant deficiencies in the themes included in the curriculum on peace education at the basic educational level of B.Ed., and the change (revision) in the curriculum was recommended based on these guidelines (Jamal et al., 2025). In all, the pieces of evidence suggest that there are poor bridges built between the policy of peaceful coexistence in Pakistan, given the limited integration across school subjects.

### **Collaborative Learning and Social Interdependence**

There has been a well-developed theoretical basis for collaborative learning as a means of social cohesion (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Positive interdependence (individuals understand that their goal is more likely to be achieved if others are successful) leads to promotive interaction in which one group interacts, mutual assistance is given, and trust building and constructive conflict management occur (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). This theoretical background has been supported and expanded by research studies that have found that well-structured cooperative learning leads to cognitive gains at the same time that it removes a number of obstacles to understanding and translates into measurable changes in interpersonal relationships, social skills, and cross-group acceptance.

Gillies and Boyle (2010) studied teacher beliefs of cooperative learning in secondary schools in Australia and concluded that teachers who were knowledgeable in the theoretical rationale of structured cooperation were significantly better at applying cooperative learning as compared to teachers who equated cooperative learning with informal seating. This finding has direct implications in the Pakistani context, where group work is often discussed in curriculum documents but not used as a structure as prescribed by Social Interdependence Theory. One of the longstanding problems with working in groups that leads to bad practice is the lack of differentiation between unorganised group work and the more effective kinds of purpose-designed group learning.

### **Teacher Education Policy in Pakistan**

The landscape of teacher education policies in Pakistan can be understood through the lens of the NPSTs (Khizar et al., 2019) as well as the National Policy on Education 2009, which envisions 'competent teachers' to be promoters of inclusive classroom cultures and

communities, tolerance and harmony. However, the literature repeatedly highlights that the programme design of peace education is not explicitly stated but rather indirectly introduced and infused throughout all existing subjects, thus leaving teacher candidates at the theoretical level but lacking practical skills. (Amber, 2021) reported that there has been a consistent finding that teacher education programmes (TEPs) in Pakistan hardly explicitly aimed at or addressed the issue of peace education; instead, they tend to be implicitly introduced and infused throughout the existing subjects of the programmes, which empowers the prospective teachers with respect to the theory, however, not the practice of peace education. Furthermore, a qualitative case study conducted in Chitral revealed that teacher-mediated peace education closely relies on pedagogical approaches less formally learnt in teacher training courses, thus supporting a second perspective that teacher education programmes fail to efficiently transfer potential values of peace to the enhanced capacity of teachers (Shamsuddin, 2016).

There are structural implications of this shortfall. Programmes that do not explicitly focus or train graduates on the facilitative skills needed to practice collaboratively and inclusively produce graduates who articulate policy values but are unable to enact or practice the same. This has nothing to do with issues of poor levels of belief; it is an issue of poor levels of professionalisation. To tackle this, it is necessary to reconceptualise the purpose of teacher education to not only rectify incorrect attitudes but to "build the capacity of teachers rooted in their beliefs" that prospective teachers generally already have.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

In this study, a qualitative research methodology with an interpretative paradigm was used. Since the questions in this study required talking with prospective teachers to gain insight into their understandings, views, and perspectives, which are all internal constructs that cannot be easily measured using numerical instruments, qualitative inquiry was suitable (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Reflexive TA) was chosen as the analysis approach because of its 'theoretical flexibility', explicit recognition of the constructive role of the researcher in analysis, and its appropriateness for introspective and interpretive accounts of 'modestly-sized' data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). Reflexive TA differs from other approaches adopted in qualitative data analysis in that it does not consider themes to be in the data and waiting to be "discovered," but rather are created by the researcher as a systematic and reflexive interpretive process.

#### **Philosophical Paradigm**

This study is inspired by social constructivist ontology, which views meaning as a product of society and experience, with no predetermined or fixed meaning (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2022). The epistemological perspective is constructionist, as the knowledge about the participants' beliefs is constructed in the researchers' interaction with the narratives and is not extracted from them. The way people convey their beliefs, namely by means of language, is understood not as a transparent window onto the inner states but as a meaning-making practice, where participants create and share their beliefs. The analytic orientation has been mainly experiential regarding the content and ideas expressed by participants and interested in what participants said they believed and experienced, but also keeping a sense of the structural and institutional contexts that informed their experience.

#### **Analytic Approach**

The analysis was inductive at the code level and theoretical at the theme level. The data were analysed in a semantic way, focused on the manifest content of what the participants said, but in the case of framings, it was analysed as latent content, where meaning was implied rather than stated. The combination matched the goals of the research questions with their need for both an accurate representation of expressed beliefs and inferential insight into the structural consequences of the beliefs.

### **Participants and Sampling**

Participants were chosen using purposive sampling to generate information-rich accounts directly related to the research questions (Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria were being a current B. Ed, B.S., and M.Phil. education student of GCWU Sialkot and willing to provide informed consent. Fourteen participants were sampled from three levels of the program, different levels of practicum experience, and multiple subject specialisms (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The concept of information power guided the evaluation of sample adequacy; it was determined that the narrow study aim and the use of purposive selection and semi-structured interviews had sufficient informational specificity (Malterud et al., 2016). The sample had diverse programme stages and practicum levels to support qualitative data collection, which created multidimensional data to support the analytical work.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the participants, held in a secluded and quiet place in the GCWU Sialkot campus. The interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The interview schedule was developed using a research question matrix, which resulted in the creation of interview questions directly linked to each of the three research questions. These questions focused on the notions of peaceful coexistence, notions about learning together, experiences in the teacher education programme, and policy proposals. All participants consented to the audio recording of all interviews. The verbatim transcriptions were made at the point of transcription from the recorded data, and transcripts were checked against the original recording, and all identifying information was removed by substituting pseudonyms for the use of participants.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Analysis was performed without taking a particular viewpoint on the design as part of the six phases of reflexive TA, as formulated by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and modified in (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Active familiarity with the data was developed through repeated reading and writing initial analytic notes in a reflexive journal of all 14 transcripts during Phase 1. The systematic generation of descriptive codes and their application to data extracts relevant to the research questions was a part of Phase 2. Phase 3 involved grouping together relevant codes and looking for relationships between codes to identify themes. In Phase 4, the candidate themes were compared with all coded data to clarify internal consistency, ensuring that they were well supported by the data and mutually distinct. In Phase 5, these themes were accurately described, elaborated, and named to highlight the key organising concept for each pattern of shared meaning rather than just broadly describing the theme. The Analytic Narrative included in Section 5 of this paper comes from phase 6. Using Microsoft Excel, these transcripts were organised and placed in a password-protected document; Excel was used only in the development of a data management tool, and not as an analyser.

### **Trustworthiness and Quality**

Trustworthiness was dealt with by means of the four criteria of Lincoln and Guba, who identified these criteria for qualitative enquiry. To achieve credibility, multiple phases of

engagement with the data, active negative case analysis (Phase 4), and careful documentation of disconfirming evidence were sustained throughout. In terms of dependability, there was a detailed audit trail of methodological and analytic decisions that took place via the reflexive journal. The interpretive assumptions and the process of the analytic reasoning work were made explicit and traceable throughout, thus ensuring confirmability. The transferability was supported by a thick description of the research context, research participants, and analytical process, which allowed people to make an "applicability judgement" based on the research findings. In contrast to inter-rater agreement, which is incompatible with the values of qualitative research embedded in the Big Q qualitative approach to Reflexive TA, quality in Reflexive TA is measured through the degree of coherence, depth, and interpretive richness of the analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Before data collection, ethical approval from the Ethical and Institutional Review Board of GCWU Sialkot was obtained. The Deputy Head of the Department of Education granted permission to be the gatekeeper. A written information sheet was provided to each participant, and written informed consent was obtained prior to conducting the interview. Participation was voluntary, and participants were told that they could withdraw at any time for any reason without affecting their academic or professional standing. To guarantee anonymity, the names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms at the transcription step. Data were collected on a password-protected device and were accessible only to the research team. The researcher was aware that there might be a power imbalance between herself as a postgraduate researcher and student participants and made an effort to ensure that none of the student participants felt compelled to provide specific viewpoints.

### **Findings**

Four themes were created based on the 14 interview transcripts using Reflexive TA. Each theme is an organising concept, and a number of shared meanings, rather than a summary of what participants said, constitute a theme. Together, the themes present a coherent analytic account of how prospective teachers' beliefs, sense of readiness, and what they judge they have been 'trained to do' are connected.

#### **Theme 1: Peaceful Co-existence as Active Moral Practice**

This theme reflects Research Question 1 and reflects how all 14 participants made a morality of peaceful coexistence, not as passive but as proactive, and a responsibility of the teacher. Peaceful coexistence was not referred to as background or something that happens naturally in the everyday life of the classroom. They expressed that it is an "active construction," an "active modelling," and "must be maintained" via intentional pedagogical processes.

##### **1a: The Inclusive Classroom as a Constructed Space**

The participants unanimously described the inclusive classroom as an environment that teachers need to actively create. Participant 07 provided a typical statement: "Peaceful coexistence in education means actually creating an environment where students with different cultures, religions, languages, and socio-economic levels can respect each other. In schools, different types of disparities are respected instead of feared." Participant 06 referred to this classroom as a space where "all voices are heard, conflicts are solved through dialogue, and diversity is honoured. All these descriptions set peaceful coexistence not as a passive default but as an achieved relational skill that is to be achieved, and the teacher as a designer of how-tos.

Participant 05 then built on this operational statement, when speaking of a place where there was no conflict, discrimination, or looking down on, "Students respect each other, communicate effectively, support each other, and learn. Of greater significance is not what the belief is but what sort of power is invested in the teacher in these accounts. These pre-service teachers perceived inclusion as a need, a need that would require them to keep practising a skill they would have to do, in a way that would be deliberate and consistent.

### **1b: The Teacher as Moral Agent**

All the participants attributed a role to teachers in building peaceful coexistence. Participant 05 simply summarised: A teacher's behaviour towards children is imitated by others. This was taken a step further by participant 07, who stated that there should be clear rules for discrimination or bullying against students and a good example set by teachers in terms of interfacing with students. Participant 03 mentioned pedagogical tools, such as role-playing and storytelling, as tools to construct empathy. Notably, Participant 04 used religious stories as a tool for peacebuilding, which was not emphasised in the registers of most of the stories, but the concept of the duty of teachers in building values that sustain peace was present at both basic and deep levels in both positive and negative registers. The differences between the registers used by the participants illustrate that these beliefs were not merely parroting policy jargon but were personally informed.

### **Theme 2: Collaborative Learning is a Relational Bridge**

This theme addresses Research Question 2. The participants saw collaborative learning projects or processes not merely as a pedagogical approach but as the primary structural process enabling peaceful coexistence, not just recommending it. Their accounts of how cooperation generates empathy and towards a common purpose also match the theoretical rationale of Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), although the participants were not explicitly aware of the theory.

### **2a: Shared Goals as Generators of Compassion**

Collaborative learning was consistently identified as transformative learning if well organised. Participant 12 said that it is a clear account:

Initially, students found working collaboratively difficult because they were used to competition to achieve the best ranks in the activity. Gradually, they came to understand that success could be shared. Now, it was not a competition anymore, but an association that assisted in building up a sense of community, a very basic element of peacefully coexisting.

Participant 10 talked about a literature circle where participants from diverse cultural backgrounds "interpreted the narrative differently." Rather than arguing about the "right answers," the group discussions enabled them to appreciate and value a diversity of interpretations and points of view, which was a lesson to them that when differences are seen as strengths rather than as threats, peaceful coexistence thrives. Participant 11 mentioned that the sense of responsibility to each other was vital to the process: A group project required collective success rather than individual marks, students realised this, and this sense of responsibility towards others enabled students to do better and gave them the feeling of oneness and unity that having a shared aim was important to enable the peace.

### **2b: Structure as a Prerequisite, Not an Option**

The participants were also very clear that peaceful coexistence within collaborative learning arises only through intentional design. Group work in general (where the division of labour is not predetermined) was invariably connected with inequality and disagreement, not harmony. Participant 06 stated: "There were learners who worked hard and others who did not work at all. The ones who worked hard felt that they were being

exploited, and this brought about anger and blame. Group work did not bring out cooperation; it brought out a lot of arguing. Participant 13 noted that there were pervasive power issues: "Students from privileged backgrounds always became the leaders, and others didn't feel privileged; group work exacerbated the power dynamics, not equality." Participant 07 commented that in some situations, students had extensive family and/or cultural bias; in such situations, collaborative grouping would increase the bias rather than eliminate it. In all these accounts, there is a fine-grained understanding that what we call collaboration is not necessarily productive; it has to be specifically designed in order to be productive, and it has to be effectively facilitated and monitored.

### **Theme 3: The Gap Between Belief and Practical Readiness**

This theme goes to a second angle towards Research Question 2 and is analytically central to the paper. A consistent gap was identified between recognising the value of peaceful coexistence and being able to enact it in the classrooms for all fourteen participants. This was not an attitudinal divide. Participants did not disconfirm the beliefs. They doubted themselves and questioned their own practical ability in delivering it.

#### **3a: Knowing Without Being Able**

The vocabulary of knowing without being able was found throughout the accounts of participants with great frequency. Participant 07 was clear about stating the difference: "I clearly understand the importance of inclusive and collaborative classrooms; learning how to make it work is still in the process of being developed. Participant 12 pointed to the issue being clearly in their programme: "I felt the training was quite theoretical, although I have ideas and understand I need to know how this can be put into practice in real life." Participant 06 agreed that "I'm not always confident about being able to use some of the strategies in complex classroom situations."

#### **3b: The Practicum as Partial Resolution**

Two participants who completed full teaching practica were found to have a significantly higher level of practical confidence than the other, less experienced participants, suggesting that there is a difference between the belief-readiness gap between those with limited field experience and those who completed full assignment teaching practica. Participant 14 pointed out the particular competency needs in the assessment area: "We were dealing with group work, but were not taught how it's going to be assessed fairly, so I didn't know how I would have to grade group work in my classroom in the future. A reading of this pattern in this theme shows that the belief-readiness gap is not a deficit belief, but the lack of what can be called professional "scaffolding," which brings belief to competence.

### **Theme 4: Teacher Education as Insufficiently Prepared Ground**

The aim of this theme is to directly correspond to Research Question 3. Participants described their teacher education preparation in regard to peaceful coexistence and collaborative pedagogy as being largely implicit, more related to theory, and inadequate to build their facilitative skills, which were grounded in their existing beliefs.

#### **4a: Implicit and Fragmented Preparation**

Participant 05 reflected the mostly dominant way of being prepared: "The ideas of diversity and inclusion were taught in my teacher training mostly through books and talks, with a strong theory but few opportunities to experience how it can be done in practice, and the context of diversity was not well understood in practice." Participant 07 was particular about collaborative learning: "Some methods in relation to collaborative learning, such as group discussions and pair work, were introduced, but not much information was provided on how to organise and lead groups, which I would have to

practice more before being confident.” However, Participant 04 indicated that there were no courses on peace education whatsoever.

#### **4b: What Participants Asked For**

Participants came up with concrete and policy-relevant recommendations. Participant 04 proposed both social-emotional and pedagogical training: "We must even be obliged to organise workshops, trainings, and talks not for students alone but also for teachers as well. They should also acquire social-emotional skills. Once a teacher is made emotionally strong, he can easily instil the same in his students' minds. Collaborative activities were needed, to which there should be reflective practice sessions, where teachers can reflect on what went well/not well in their collaborative work and continuously improve, as described by Participant 14: “The teacher should be provided with reflective practice sessions so they can evaluate what went well/not well in the collaborative work and constantly improve. There was a call by Participant 06 for cultural awareness training. There were some advocates for field experience in a variety of schools.” Interestingly, Participant 11 was one of the most enthusiastic about the inclusive nature of their programme, but still considered the lack of practical depth to be insufficient – even those more well-prepared seemed to feel the lack.

### **Discussion**

#### **Interpretation of Findings**

These four themes delineate a coherent, meaningful, and comprehensive meta-finding: The prospective teachers in this study have a motivational and conceptual readiness to engage in peace-oriented and collaborative education, while structurally they are unable to do so. This finding inverts the traditional discourse on teacher education challenge in Pakistan. The issue is not that the future teachers have the wrong beliefs regarding peaceful coexistence; it is that the views are present, grounded in morality, and, in general, more or less compatible with the normative aspirations of the policy-making of Pakistan. The challenge comes as teacher education programmes have yet to leverage those beliefs through the acquisition of practical professional abilities that could be realised in actual classrooms. It is not an attitudinal issue but a professionalisation issue and requires a structural solution.

The findings are presented in a cross-theme manner that follows a logical sequence over the themes, relating to a clear policy argument. Theme 1 lays the moral groundwork: participants are aware of what peaceful coexistence is and why it is important. With Theme 2, there was a shift in the target area towards the vehicle itself, as they realised that peaceful coexistence can only be done through collaborative learning and is not just talked about. In Theme 3, they show the limitation: They are unable to drive the vehicle confidently yet. Theme 4 uncovers the systemic cause: the preparation system has not yet provided the scaffolding that it needs.

#### **6.2 Connection to Existing Literature**

The identification of well-developed beliefs in the peaceful coexistence of prospective teachers prior to their formal professional training is in line with the basic premises of Pajares (1992), suggesting that teachers' beliefs are constructed through certain experiential observations even before they enter the university. In the context of Pakistan, this finding complements the research of (Amber, 2021) on the general support of peace education among prospective teachers and highlights the extension to specific conceptualisations of active inclusion (as opposed to passive non-conflict) that pose moral dilemmas. This constructivist framing is provided by the participants when they view teachers as intentional and active in creating relational climates, and is more than just

supporting policy language—this is in line with the normativisation of the Peace Education Framework.

The participants' tacit construct of collaborative learning as a relational bridge can be clearly related to the theoretical rationale of Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), which considers positive interdependence as a source of promoting interaction, trust, and cooperative orientation towards others. It is important to note that this understanding was reached in the practical and observational process itself and did not come as a result of participants' prior encounter with the theory. This is a substantial and analytically significant finding, as it indicates that there can be an experience-based understanding that is pedagogically familiar to the teacher. However, the consistent identification of unstructured group work leading to conflicts and not cooperation by a variety of participants extends and contextualises the work of Gillies and Boyle (2010) on teacher beliefs about cooperative learning and suggests that this is a gap in facilitative skills rather than conceptual understanding in the context of pre-service teachers from Pakistan. The meta-finding most directly challenges prevailing teacher education programmes' approach to teaching peace education, which is more like an implicit rather than an explicit mode of teaching, as noted within Pakistan, for example, by Amber (2021) and Jamal and Kiran (2023). The current findings offer a qualitative account grounded in participants' perspectives of what the practice of that implicit approach does for prospective teachers: theoretically adequate but practically empty. An important contribution towards the evidence base, as it frames the analysis not in the coverage of content, but in experiential preparation.

### **Implications**

The theoretical implication of this study is to disseminate the idea in teacher beliefs research that belief content and belief enactability should be distinguished in research in Pakistan. Often, the question that existing frameworks attempt to answer is whether prospective teachers' attitudes are positive or not, but the question the present analysis proposes is whether those attitudes are supported by experiences that enable enactment. Evidently, the implication is quite practical that the practicum sessions in B.Ed. and M.Phil. programmes must be redesigned with explicit attention to group design, allocation of roles, facilitation technique, and equitable assessment while setting students in this context. Policy consequence: the frameworks of NPSTs and B.Ed. Curricula should explicitly include practically based training in collaborative pedagogy and peace-based classroom management, and not be only implicitly covered by the currently existing subjects (Khizar et al., 2019).

### **Limitations**

These findings had several limitations that constrained the extent to which they could be interpreted. The sampling of the study was conducted from one institution, and so the findings cannot be statistically generalised to the large population of prospective teachers in Pakistan. Data were collected through self-report interviews, and socially desirable responses cannot be ruled out; that is, participants might have expressed what they believed to be appropriate in terms of beliefs with professional norms as opposed to what they might actually practice if they were not in an interview context. Classroom observation was not conducted as part of the research, and so there is no independent evidence to verify whether reported beliefs reflect observed behaviour. Obviously, interpretive decisions were shaped by the researcher's positionality, though managed reflexively. The sample consisted of all women and was from a women university, which limits the transferability of the findings to a co-educational university context.

### Future Research Directions

There are three directions that are worthy of special consideration. The aforementioned belief-readiness gap found in this study may be tested using a multi-institutional comparative study throughout Punjab to determine whether the mentioned gap is specific to GCWU Sialkot or exists across all institutions of teacher education in the province of Punjab. Second, a longitudinal study in which changes in beliefs and the development of practical competence are followed in the course of the entire period such as a B.Ed. or M.Phil. programme, would provide evidence of when and how the difference is narrowed and what programme experiences are most important. Third, an amalgamation of the data collected in interviews and classroom observation during the Practicum would better lend support to the claims and judgments regarding the connection between beliefs and enactments.

### Conclusion

The beliefs of the fourteen prospective teachers in relation to peaceful coexistence and collaboration in learning pedagogies at GCWU Sialkot, Pakistan, were explored in this study. The analysis generated four interrelated themes, which, taken together, can be understood as a coherent meta-finding: these prospective teachers held values-based beliefs about peaceful coexistence that were well prepared for future action in their first years as teachers; the teacher education programme failed to sufficiently scaffold them to make the leap from these beliefs to action.

The key finding is that the teacher education challenge in Pakistan is distinct from the one that teacher education programmes seem to be focused on addressing. The issue is not attitudinal. It is a professional formation issue. Prospective teachers should already be convinced of the importance of inclusive, collaborative, and peace-building education. They are already convinced of it and often to an advanced level. What they lack are opportunities to have structured, supervised, and reflexive experiences of facilitating collaborative learning in a real classroom and experiences specifically and rigorously enacted as suggested by the Social Interdependence Theory and as described by their own narratives as lacking from preparation.

Future research should explore whether the belief-readiness gap is present across all teacher education programmes in Pakistan and whether it can be reduced with specific features of the programmes. The most compelling evidence base for curriculum change would come from a longitudinal study tracking prospective teachers from program entry to early career practicum, which would provide the strongest evidence base. In the absence of such research, the current findings provide a participant's voice, a grounded argument for redesigning practicum experiences to incorporate a pedagogical approach that would be collaboratively learning and/or supervised, and for embedding explicit, practically grounded peace pedagogy in all B.Ed and M.Phil Education courses in Pakistan.

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