



Student Project (Umair Asif, Ph.D)

Sport for Development and Violent Extremism Prevention

« Role of Sport for Development and Peace Programs in Preventing Violent Extremism among Young people in Pakistan »

CONTEXTE

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the contribution of sport for the promotion of tolerance, respect, and peace, while the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) has highlighted sport's role in preventing VE (Canton, 2021; Miedico, 2020; UN 2015; UNODC 2018). Pakistan is one of the countries most affected by VE: from 2001-2015, Pakistan lost an estimated 80,000 lives through terrorism-related activity, with complex damage being inflicted across the nation's economic, social and cultural fabric (Asif, 2018; Basit, 2015; Wilkins, 2015). In demographic terms, Pakistan is highly vulnerable to future VE: young people are reported to constitute over 60% of the Pakistani population, and to report high levels of attempted manipulation by extremist organizations (Asif et al., 2022; Paracha, 2012; Fair et al., 2014; Macey, 1999).

OBJECTIVES

While numerous organizations in Pakistan utilize sports and physical activities as tools to educate young people and promote peaceful societies, no systematic research has been conducted to examine the role of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programs in addressing violent extremism (VE). This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the potential of SDP initiatives in preventing VE among Pakistani youth.

- 1) Examine the role of SDP programs in preventing VE among young people in Pakistan;
- 2) Identify key factors of youth-based SDP programs that contribute to VE prevention;
- 3) Analyze stakeholder perceptions of youth-based SDP programs operating in Pakistan.



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Université du Québec à Montréal UQAM)
Pavillon des Sciences biologiques (SB), Office SB-4375
141, avenue du Président-Kennedy
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1Y4 Canada

Tegwen Gadais
Université du Québec à Montréal
(UQAM), Canada
gadais.tegwen@uqam.ca

METHODS

The study focused on key literature in the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) sector and the prevention of violent extremism (VE) among youth. Using a qualitative research methodology, data were gathered through Interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders in the SDP programs, including program participants, NGO officials and volunteers. Additional data were obtained through the analysis of relevant documents, such as NGO and government reports, as well as statistical data held by NGOs on program participants. To ensure robust and insightful findings, the research adopted a comparative approach by investigating different SDP programs in Pakistan.

Data analysis: The collected data will be further analyzed through thematic analysis, a method that allows for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014; Alhojailan, 2012). This approach provides a flexible yet rigorous framework to uncover underlying meanings and relationships within the qualitative data. To ensure systematic and in-depth analysis, NVivo 14 software was employed to facilitate the inductive coding process. NVivo enabled the organization, categorization, and visualization of data, supporting the iterative process of theme development and ensuring that findings were grounded in the data. The combination of thematic analysis and NVivo 14 enhanced the reliability and depth of the analysis by enabling researchers to systematically manage large volumes of qualitative data while maintaining the context and nuance of the participants' perspectives.

RESULTS

The expected results are divided into four research objectives. Globally, we believe the results of this study will allow us to understand better how SDP programs help prevent VE among young people in Pakistan and the current status of SDP and VE prevention literature around the world.

This research collaboration between Quebec and Pakistan has the potential to position Quebec researchers on the international map of VE research. It offers an opportunity to share best practices, provide guidance, and support nations grappling with similar challenges in addressing VE effectively. The findings and recommendations from this study can be extrapolated and applied globally, significantly preventing VE and building community resilience.



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