

Education and Global Peace in National Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between education and peace is an area of educational research that merits sustained attention from scholars. The highest form of objective for any education is inculcating peace and it is an essential value to be cherished by every individual. Peace is a state of inner calm or end of conflict. Peace education is a planning strategy of eliminating the conflicts and violence caused by in justice, inequality and human rights, violations, and implementing the ways and means of reducing the same through appropriate teaching and learning tactics by means of producing responsible global citizen to attain and spread the peace in the world. Today's conflicts are generally fought between cultural groups within a nation, rather than between nation-states. Less developed nations, many of them being multicultural, are particularly prone to the risk of violent conflict. Because violence caused by internal conflict is a major obstacle to achieving universal access to education and other development goals, research on education and peace has become an important agenda item in the development aid community. This has added international aid organizations to the major players in education and peace research. Integrating education for peace and conflict prevention across the entire education system is vital not only to support the post-2015 education agenda, but also to promote the right to education and holistic development of millions of children who are being denied access to education because of violent conflicts. Over the past two decades, different programmes in peace education and life skills have been implemented in post-conflict afflicted countries, with the objective to promote peace as an essential part of the recovery process.

Keywords: Peace, conflict, structural violence, equity, evaluation, evidence, legitimacy

Introduction:

We all want to live in a world free from violence. Researchers engaged in studies about education and peace are primarily interested in finding a way to reduce violence in the world. Violence harms persons physically and psychologically, often making a “normal life” forever impossible. Such tragedies frequently fall on vulnerable people, including children. This has serious consequences not only for the affected individuals, but for the society as a whole, as sustainable development will not be achieved without healthy, productive, and informed citizens in the future generations. This shared hope drives us to pursue education policies and practices to

promote peace, and to seek evidence to improve such policies and practices.

Research on education and peace is meaningful for three reasons. First, violent conflicts occur in almost every continent of the world. Reflecting this reality, “peace-building” has become a popular terminology used by academics in related fields, as well as by policy-makers and practitioners in the international aid community. It was symbolic that Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former secretary general of the United Nations, added peace-building to the role of the UN in conflict situations. Mr. Boutros-Ghali foresaw that activism was necessary to remove the potential seeds of violence,

rather than simply observing the temporary cessation of hostilities. Education is one of these activist interventions, because it can affect the values, perspectives, and attitudes of future generations who will shape tomorrow's world.

Second, conflict deprives many people of the very opportunity to learn, a basic human right. UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report in 2011 had a subtitle *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education* to remind us of the dire situation of children in conflict areas who could not access education. The majority of these out-of-school children were girls. The United Nations recently announced Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that called on its member states to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, shifting its emphasis from access to quality. For children in conflict-affected societies, even access to basic education is still a dream unfulfilled.

Third, there is a growing concern that the current emphasis on accountability related to the acquisition of cognitive skills may marginalize research on education and peace. Policy-makers tend to seek "quick solutions" to problems in a society. Research studies that deal with long-term, complex issues, such as education and peace, may not be given a place in the priority lists of governmental funding. In general, the non-cognitive benefits of education on individual lives, in areas such as tolerance and critical thinking, are not easily assessed, while their impact on society is even more challenging to evaluate. Researchers may prefer studies that yield quick outcomes for publication in the competitive academic culture. It is then critical to continue arguing for the importance of peace and education research, giving proper recognition to such research.

The Nature of Modern Conflict:

Research on education and peace must be situated in each particular circumstance. Present-day conflicts are commonly characterized as interstate, or fought between different groups within

a national boundary. Since World War II, many people have perished, either by participating in or being caught in interethnic conflicts. One study shows that 20 million died as a result of the wars between 1945 and 1993, of which 70% were casualties in interethnic clashes. Today, it is commonly understood that interethnic conflicts are not necessarily attributed to the thesis of "class of civilizations," but may be multifaceted, such as including resource competition. Still, given that the majority of today's sovereign states are multicultural, and previously homogeneous states are becoming increasingly multicultural due to globalization, one cannot underscore the importance of addressing the challenge of "living together."

Recognizing the need to address peaceful coexistence, the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century was convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its 1996 report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within* is still relevant to today's even more connected world; it declared "living together" as one of the four pillars of learning for the 21st century, along with learning to know, learning to do, and learning to be. The report explains that conflict is a part of human nature, and we need to learn how to manage it by using nonviolent means. To accomplish this, education should provide opportunities to "discover others," to learn that different people may share common interests and must depend on each other for their survival. As an educational approach, schools are encouraged to provide learning activities, including sports and cultural events, whereby students of diverse backgrounds work together for common objectives. Through this cooperation, students would become more aware of their common characteristics and interests.

Relationship between Education and Peace

The conceptual core of peace education is violence, its control, reduction, and elimination. Researchers studying education and peace are primarily interested in discovering and understanding

the relationship between these two concepts. Peace, or its absence, affects education significantly. Peace can help fulfill the achievement of basic human rights, including the right to receive basic quality education. The absence of peace, or the presence of physical, structural, and cultural violence, can affect the provision of educational services and learning outcomes. Education for All (EFA), a global campaign to safeguard children's right to education, will not be achieved unless significant efforts are made on the part of national governments and the international aid community to provide education during and after conflicts, natural disasters, and similar situations.

Key Debate: Unity and Diversity

A core debate in the field of education and peace research concerns the ways in which we deal with the balance between unity and diversity. The 2015 Incheon Declaration stressed the equity of education, by recognizing and embracing the diversity of children's needs, conditions, and cultural roots. Such values are ingrained in the concept of multicultural education. In its original concept, multicultural education is based on cultural relativism, the concept that there is no "better" or "worse" culture than others. Schools are encouraged to teach children their cultural backgrounds and cherish each and every child's background.

However, multicultural education came to be viewed with some skepticism in the 1990s. Facing the arrival of overwhelming numbers of immigrants from non-Western civilizations and the perceived need to integrate them into their societies, the Western governments began advocating citizenship education, whose basic premise lies in the need to have a set of knowledge, skills, and values shared by their citizens. While acknowledging that each culture has value, policy-makers and scholars became concerned that social divisions based on the lack of interaction between cultural communities might create fear and mistrust between them. Policy leaders in these host nations carefully avoid

using the term "assimilation" so as not to give the impression that their policies deny the cultural rights of minorities. Instead, new terminologies such as "social integration" or "citizenship" came to be used in their policy documents.

An alternative approach to a unity-based paradigm is social cohesion, a looser form of social integration. As previously mentioned, social cohesion in a multicultural society refers to a trusting relationship between different social groups, as well as between civilians and public entities. Social cohesion is not about assimilation, but seeks to enhance trust while respecting diversity. In developing inter-group trust, however, sharing a minimum set of values and principles is considered necessary. Hence, liberal integrationists argue that common citizenship education is needed. When this type of citizenship education is planned, its curriculum has to be negotiated and agreed upon across diverse social groups so as to give legitimacy to its content and modes of delivery.

Peace Education:

A central focus of peace and education research is to understand education's contributions to peace. Peace education encompasses a broad range of pedagogical approaches that aim to nurture attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to nonviolent, equitable, and sustainable peace. These approaches are adopted in various types of peace education. Ian Harris, for example, lists international education, development education, human rights education, and conflict resolution education as types of peace education. These types differ in their focuses but share a common ground in that they recognize a difference of opinions as the reality of a human society. Based on this premise, they explain the roots of violence and its different forms and seek alternatives to violence. Researchers on peace education need to recognize the diversity of its implementation and understand that its approach is often a product of each particular context.

Citizenship education, or more precisely democratic citizenship education, is one of the

increasingly popular models of peace education. Its primary purpose is to develop critical citizens through debate, active learning, and teamwork. As critical citizenship education inevitably deals with divisive issues where equality and equity are at stake, innovative pedagogies are necessary. For example, many of the world's teachers are not accustomed to creating or allowing classroom dynamics where students feel comfortable debating controversial issues. For example, Palestinian and Israeli students in a peace education program discussed the conflict in Northern Ireland, a land far from the Middle East, and were able to understand the two opposing perspectives. Such a pedagogy may be effective, because the students have no direct stake or emotional involvement in the conflict; therefore, they are able to analyze conflict dynamics in a more objective way. This may then lead them to analyze and discuss domestic issues.

Another type of peace education model very common in post-conflict societies today is inter-group activities. These activities are meant to develop trust between individuals, as well as different social groups. The activities aim to nurture empathy by human-to-human contacts. Such an approach to peace education is based on what James Page calls the "ethics of care" that stresses "relationship rather than principles." According to the ethics of care, educators strive to create an environment where children learn to cherish human relations based on trust and caring. A learning environment also includes the perceptions and attitudes of the educators.

Evidence, Feasibility, and Legitimacy:

Since peace-building was recognized as an important agenda within development aid during the 1990s, practitioners of education for peace-building have been under pressure to show that their programs are evidence-based and produce measurable outcomes. Today, the most powerful way to make a causal inference, showing that a particular intervention leads to a particular

outcome, is to conduct an experimental study. Individuals are assigned to two groups, one that receives an educational intervention and the other that does not. Then the performance of the two groups is compared. The random selection method reduces bias and excludes factors other than the intervention that can influence the outcome. This is an effective method to establish a causal relationship. The data produced by an experimental study, or randomized controlled trial (RCT), is widely regarded as "scientific hard evidence."

The evaluation aspect of peace-building education policies and practices is a critical area that deserves further discussion and inquiries. The design of evaluation itself, by using a logical framework, for example, often provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss and agree upon the objectives of a program and the indicators to monitor and judge the extent of the program's achievement. Also, research studies can analyze program results and draw lessons from the implementation of a program, which can help future interventions be more efficient and effective. Evaluation is particularly important for peace education initiatives because its achievement tends to be non-cognitive; thus, it is difficult to measure in a quantitative and clear-cut manner. As a result, stakeholders may interpret the results of interventions differently.

Global citizenship education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as active learning and "education for the 21st century" all stress critical thinking and intercultural competencies. Societies that have undergone violent conflict typically need the type of education that helps learners acquire critical minds, problem-solving skills, and tolerance. But other societies, in fact every society in this globalizing world, also need such education. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) alone cannot yield significant insights into how these educational activities are being conducted and what they have achieved. Education and peace research is now challenged to be flexible,

innovative, and moral, while maintaining academic rigor. This field is called upon to develop evaluation methods that can examine the effectiveness of these new types of education.

Research on education and peace is not just about pedagogy but also about policies, governance, and administration that are fair to all. Peace education cannot succeed if a society or school does not respect the principles of fairness and equity. Researchers need to continue questioning the effectiveness of education policies and practices, not just from the viewpoint of increasing individual students' academic achievements, but also from the perspective of reducing marginalization and enhancing inclusiveness. From this viewpoint, it is important that research on education and peace needs to critically examine issues from multiple perspectives so as to ensure the issue of equity is not overlooked.

Conclusion:

Education has often been considered an effective tool to promote peace because it shapes the next generation's minds, attitudes, and skills. New skills are needed to resolve our inevitable differences in a nonviolent way. In the past, however, education has predominantly been viewed as a way to develop human capital to enhance economic growth or to promote national unity. Education and peace has been somewhat sidelined in the face of these national priorities. Nevertheless, in this time of globalization that challenges the nation-state paradigm, research on education and peace is more important than ever, and can significantly contribute to the discussion of human security, or protecting human lives and livelihoods. For this, we first need to work on the operationalization of the two concepts, education and peace, in view of the nature of modern conflict, and conduct rigorously designed research studies to examine the relationship between them. Peace. Operationalized as the accumulation of inter-group trust in a community, rather than interstate

diplomatic relations. Given that most violent conflicts today occur between different social groups within a nation or community, social cohesion can be a useful concept, providing an analytical lens for research on education and peace.

Education and peace can be enriched and utilized further for the development of policies and practices if it addresses the questions of feasibility and legitimacy. The feasibility of peace education needs more attention, because it often faces resistance in politically volatile contexts. Scholars can examine when peace education is perceived as legitimate and likely to be supported by all stakeholders during its implementation. Such endeavors, together with the development of effective evaluation tools and practices, can significantly enhance both policies and practices concerning education for peace.

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