EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE IN COTABATO CITY STATE POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE

BRO. JOSE ARNOLD L. ALFEREZ

OCDS, Ph.D.

Program Head, Peace and Development, CCSPC Graduate College

Abstract: Peace education is aimed at teaching individuals the information, attitudes, values, and behavioural competencies needed to resolve conflicts without violence and to build and maintain mutually beneficial, harmonious relationships. There are many approaches to peace education, many of which are based on ideology, practical experience, and good intentions. What is lacking is peace education programmes based on theories validated by research that can be operationalized into practical procedures. In CCSPC, Peace Education has been seen through development and environmental studies that are offered as common courses in Universities and also civic education carried out by civil societies. However, these activities do not reflect a comprehensive peace education that can generate a culture of peace. This paper explored the effectiveness of peace education programmes put in place by Graduate College as a sustainable management tool for peace. The study employed three interrelated theories which underlie effective peace education: social interdependence theory which deals with the nature of cooperation and competition; constructive controversy theory which deals with political discourse and creative problem solving, and integrative negotiations theory which deals with mutually beneficial agreements. The research has validated these theories, and each was operationalized into practical procedures. The management objective was to explore a range of educational programmes put in place to enhance peace. Specific objectives included: To find out the strategies the schools have adopted to conduct peace education and how successful the implementation has been; to find out teachers perception on the necessity of peace education and to establish the effects of peace education on students and the civil society by extension. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was based in Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, Cotabato City. The target population of this study comprised the MA and PhD students, the teachers and the Program Heads of Studies in each college were purposively sampled for the interview. These Program Heads were selected on the basis of their experience as teachers in charge of academic and other programmes in their respective schools and therefore were conversant with strategies employed by schools to initiate the peace programmes. Data collected was arranged in themes and sub-themes that helped in attaining the research objectives. The researcher thereafter conducted content, theoretical reflection analysis.

Keywords: Peace education, Environmental education, Human Rights Education, Peace-making, Peace-building, Conflict Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Education is important and a key feature in managing various issues in any society. It is also perceived as an instrument for alleviating poverty, promoting social change, equality and general wellbeing of a people. Despite this recognition worldwide, the role of education in conflict resolution particularly in Mindanao has received minimal attention. Instead,

the focus of education in conflict has been on its effects, which include; destruction of schools, death of teachers and students as well as effects on development. Since conflicts are natural, there is need to embark on developing skills to deal with intolerance and violence. Peace Education programme is therefore customized to help the community to move from a culture of violence that is well known, to a culture of peace and tranquility. Moreover, the violence experienced in Mindanao was a wakeup call to institutions of higher learning, NGOs and civil societies to rethink of mechanisms to settle internal disputes in a non-violent manner. This clearly show that there is need to equip the society, especially the youth and security agencies, with skills and knowledge that can help them cope with the social, economic, environmental and political challenges Obura (2010) reports that Peace Education programme was introduced in CCSPC since in the school year 2010.

The aim of this programme is to inculcate values of tolerance, appreciation of diversity, peaceful co-existence, patriotism, nationhood among others. The programme is intended to help learners acquire relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to foster behaviour change that enhance peaceful coexistence. Peace Education empowers students with problem solving skills, ability to address conflicts peacefully, and thus promote tolerance for diversity, cultural differences and human dignity. Young minds, at the formative stage, need to be effectively equipped with values and attitudes that promote interdependence and respect of the sanctity for human life and appreciation of the environment.

This programme is implemented through partnerships and collaboration with Development partners, like Notre Dame University which is a pioneering institution of peace education in Mindanao as well as to the Philippines. The government recognizes the importance of education in shaping a peaceful future. In this regard the Commission on Higher Education as well as the Department of Education aims at ensuring that both the content and the process of education promote peace, social justice, respect for human rights. Philippines is committed to providing basic and quality education to every child. In view of this, it is the country's desire to provide a learning environment that is harmonious and safe for all. Further on, integration of peace education promotes development of values and attitudes for positive living hence facilitate holistic development of the learners. The country therefore puts emphasis in education as the very foundation through which a just and peaceful society can be built.

This aims at preparing students to become responsible citizens and equip them with skills that promote peace and human dignity at all levels of interaction; to make students aware of causes of conflict and ways of resolving conflicts peacefully; to use the classroom as a springboard through which the global values of positive interdependence, social justice and participation in decision making processes are learned and practiced by learners; to foster positive images that leads to respect for cultural diversity so that young people may learn to live peaceably in diverse communities around the world and to promote nationhood and citizenship among students.

Mahatma Gandhi once stated, "If we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children." Pope John Paul II also said; "To reach peace, teach peace." Lasting peace may depend on educating future generations into the competencies, perspectives, attitudes, values, and behavioural patterns that will enable them to build and maintain peace. Peace Education is participatory and activity oriented. It is neither taught as an extra subject in class nor examined as a standalone subject. It is against this backdrop that this study explored a range of educational programmes put in place to enhance peace among students and by extension the community at large.

Statement of the Problem:

Peace education is the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed

to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. Peace education is a life-long learning process, and occurs in formal and informal settings. One of the key principles of peace education is that learners understand what they need to know. Moreover, the setting of formal education provides a unique and critical opportunity for students to learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviour necessary for a culture of peace. However, there exists a gap in knowledge on what strategies schools have devised to conduct peace education, the impact and the teachers response to it. It is with regards to the aforementioned that this study addressed the effectiveness of peace education programmes in Cotabato City State Polytechnic College.

Objectives of the study:

The management objective is to explore the effectiveness of peace education programmes in CCSPC, Cotabato City.

Specific objectives include:

1. To find out the strategies the schools have adopted to conduct peace education and how effective the implementation has been.

2. To establish the effects of peace education on students and the civil society.

3. To find out teachers perception on the necessity of peace education.

Research Questions include:

1. What strategies have schools adopted to conduct peace education and how effective has the implementation been?

2. What are the effects of peace education on students and the civil society?

3. What is the teachers' perception on the necessity of peace education?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used three interrelated theories which underlie effective peace education: social interdependence theory which deals with the nature of cooperation and competition, constructive controversy theory which deals with political discourse and creative problem solving, and integrative negotiations theory which deals with mutually beneficial agreements.

In order to create and maintain consensual peace, relationships among relevant parties must be dominated by cooperation, not competition. Social interdependence theory underlies cooperation and competition. Social interdependence exists when the accomplishment of each individual's goals is affected by the actions of others (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005b). There are two types of social interdependence: positive (cooperation) and negative (competition). Positive interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals (i.e., there is a positive relationship among goal attainments) and, therefore, promote each other's efforts to achieve the goals. Negative interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals (i.e., there is a negative relationship among goal attainments) and, therefore, obstruct each other's efforts to achieve the goals. Through the use of social interdependence theory the study established that Kisumu teachers practically assert to the learners that no interdependence results in a situation in which they can individually perceive that they can reach their goal regardless of whether other individuals in the situation attain or do not attain their goals. They categorically emphasize to them the necessity of the spirit of cooperation and positive competition.

The basic premise of social interdependence theory is that the way in which interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the situation (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970; Johnson & Johnson, 1974, 1989, 2005b). Positive interdependence promotes interaction i.e., individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to complete tasks, achieve, or produce in order to reach the group's goals, negative interdependence results in oppositional interaction i.e., may be defined as individuals discouraging and obstructing each other's efforts to complete tasks, achieve, or produce in order to reach their goals and no interdependence results in no interaction as individuals act independently without any interchange with each other while they work to achieve their goals. In line with the social independence theory the study realized that the teachers have fostered an important aspect of interaction by initiating open-minded discussion of diverse views as has been discussed in this research. The open-minded discussion of opposing views tends to result in effective, integrative decisions and strengthened relationships and the understanding of each other's perspectives and a willingness to integrate everyone's ideas into a joint decision. Open minded discussion has made the students to seek outcomes that are mutually beneficial, which is the defining characteristic of integrative agreements.

Constructive controversy theory underlies political discourse and creative problem solving. A controversy exists when one person's ideas, opinions, information, theories, or conclusions are incompatible with those of another and the two seek to reach an agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 2003a, 2007). Controversies are resolved by engaging in

what Aristotle called deliberate discourse i.e., the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of proposed actions aimed at synthesizing novel solutions i.e., creative problem solving. Through the use of Constructive controversy theory the study established that the process through which constructive controversy has created positive outcomes in the schools has also involved the open discussions' employed by the teachers.

Integrative negotiation theory underlies resolving of conflicts of interests to maximize joint gain and mutual benefit. Negotiation is a process by which persons who have shared and opposed interests and want to come to an agreement try to work out a settlement (Johnson &Johnson, 2009). Broadly, there are two approaches to negotiation: distributive i.e. where the goal is to make an agreement more favourable to oneself than to the other negotiators and integrative i.e. where the goal is to make an agreement that benefits everyone involved. When individuals are unable to negotiate a resolution to their conflict, they may request help from a mediator. A mediator is a neutral person who helps two or more people resolves their conflict, usually by negotiating an integrative agreement.

One procedure the teachers have engaged the students in integrative negotiations has been by teaching students to be peacemakers. Students learn the negotiation and mediation procedures, retain their knowledge throughout the school year and into the following year, apply the procedures to other people's conflicts, transfer the procedures to non-classroom settings such as the playground and lunchroom, transfer the procedures to non-school settings such as the home, and engage in problem solving rather than win-lose negotiations. When involved in conflicts, trained students use more constructive strategies such as integrative negotiations than untrained students. Students' attitudes toward conflict become more positive. The number of discipline problems that teachers have to deal with decrease and referrals to administrators drop. Students generally like to engage in the procedures. When integrated into academic units, the Peacemaker training tends to increase academic achievement and long-term retention of the academic material. Academic units, especially in subject areas such as literature and history, provide a setting to understand conflicts, practice how to resolve them, and use them to gain insight into the material being studied. It is difficult to resolve conflicts constructively when they occur in competitive and individualistic contexts. In a competitive context, individuals strive to win rather than solve the problem. In an individualistic context, individuals tend to care only about their own self-interests and ignore the interests of others. It is only in a cooperative context that conflicts tend to be resolved constructively.

Significance:

It is hoped that the findings of this study shall help the Government, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Department of Education in streamlining its policy on peace education. The education planners may use the results in evaluating the success of the programme and make adjustments where necessary. The validity of the study also lies in the necessity to assist in human resource planning and allocation of funds to assist in the implementation of the peace education programmes. The study provides information on the strategies schools have adopted to conduct peace education and the roles the teachers have played in creating a Culture of peace in schools. The study forms a basis for monitoring and increasing knowledge up on which future researchers can build on.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey design. Ader et al (2008) affirm that descriptive survey is a method of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the status of a subject of study. Descriptive survey design was chosen because it is appropriate for educational fact-finding and yields a great deal of information, which is accurate. It also enables a researcher to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of the existing conditions (Cohen et al, 2000). The survey design enabled the researcher to gather accurate information on strategies in CCSPC have put in place to conduct peace education.

The study employed questionnaires and interview guide as instruments of data collection. The researchers organized a pilot study to pre-test the data collection instruments to ascertain their validity and reliability. The researchers at this point gave an overview of the research premise to the respondents whose participation was on a voluntary basis and appealed to them to give true and accurate responses that were to be kept as confidential as possible.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers and the students regarding the effectiveness of peace education programmes in CCSPC. The Open– ended questions were used to gather in depth information and enabled the researchers to gather data from a large number of respondents at a particular time while closed–ended questions gave out structured responses, which facilitated the ease of analysis.

Interview schedule was particularly used to gather data from the directors of studies who were the key informants. The semi-structured interview guides were used to obtain qualitative data from the respondents. The researchers and the research assistants had a one on one extensive probing as they noted down the information given. This approach allowed the interviewers to get complete and detailed information on the research topic. The method was also ideal since interaction between interviewers and respondents stimulated richer responses and allowed new and valuable thoughts to emerge. The researchers also gained first hand insights into the respondents' behaviours, attitudes, language and feelings.

The information gathered was used to verify information obtained through teachers' and students' questionnaires and also gave additional information, which was not captured in the questionnaires, as it was more flexible than questionnaires. To confirm the accuracy of the information, the researchers and the assistants posed similar questions to different directors of studies although no attempt was made to ask the same set of questions to all the directors of studies. Some directors of studies were asked considerably more questions than others. Some side questions were prompted by the new information the directors of studies gave in the course of the interview.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies in CCSPC have adapted to Conduct Peace Education and how successful the Implementation has been:

Peace Education is not taught as a standalone subject but is integrated into the curriculum through the different Graduate College courses. The programme also uses co-curricular activities, participatory school governance, anti-bullying interventions and community outreach as a way to encourage the informal learning of peace education. Educational initiatives also have areas of overlap with peace education, and with each other. These creativities include, Life Skills and psychosocial rehabilitation. Peace education uses experiential and activity oriented teaching methodologies. Danesh (2006:73) assert that Peace education calls for a fundamental shift in the philosophy of education. He contends that though peace education is taught as a part of the "hidden curriculum", the teachers aim at total transformation of students. The transformation from a culture of war to a culture of peace requires nothing less. However, integrating peace education principles into classroom practice and daily life can happen overnight, and is a way a teacher, can make an important contribution to promoting a culture of peace to the world.

The role teachers and schools play in building peace is valuable. The CCSPC teachers assert that they became teachers for many reasons; many entered the teaching profession as a way of giving back to the community, to promote positive change, and to contribute to a better future for the children of the world. They integrate peace education principles into their teaching, by being role models of none-violence, by treating all students equally and fairly, with compassion, and by promoting democracy in the classroom. Their efforts are applauded and this resource helps in building upon the students skills for peace-making.

From the interview and discussions with the respondents, it emerged that CCSPC has initiated the key strategies for the successful instigation of peace education. The school embrace mechanisms which include equal (horizontal) teacher—student relationship in which everyone teaches and learns simultaneously from one another. This includes valuing the knowledge and experience that all participants bring to the learning environment, and allowing all participants the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience. This also means remaining open to learning from others, and to remain flexible to new ideas.

The teachers in CCSPC use dialogue, meaning that they encourage discussion throughout the teaching period. This is in contrast to lecture, which is a common form of teaching. In peace education, the teachers try to minimize lecture time, and encourage dialogue, in which all students are engaged. The teachers steer dialogue by posing meaningful questions, and by ensuring that all students have the opportunity to speak.

The teachers have self-reflection; they are introspective and curious about their own nature. They notice their own reactions, actions, and consequences of their actions. They also encourage students to have self-reflection. A teacher from a given school explained for example that if they have a discussion about discrimination, students can reflect on questions such as, "Have I ever been discriminated against? Have I ever discriminated against someone else?" They spend some time discussing this, or giving students time to compose journal entries about the questions. Time for contemplation is important and the guiding questions and reflective questions in each topic serve to guide the process. Promotion of inclusivity, diversity, and equality in the classroom is an essential tool to peace education.

These principles manifest themselves in a variety of ways, and are always considered by the teachers. In inclusivity, the teachers promote equal involvement of everyone regardless of age, sex, gender, ethnicity among others. Very simply, it means they do not leave anyone out. For example the teachers embrace inclusivity in mixed secondary schools. They treat the boys and girls equally in the classroom. These principles are the foundation of peace education in CCSPC, and teachers consider them at all times. When handling the topic on National Integration the teachers teach alternative positions before taking a stance on integration. They Facilitate and use lateral, creative and critical thinking processes. They teach how to integrate, and then analyze, power relations that are evident in local to global interactions, including analysis of international relations as outcomes of economic systems and political domination, such as capitalism and imperialism. Teachers legitimize diverse viewpoints from the students to enable them to express their own views and to develop their civil courage and public voices.

The topic on conflict resolution taught to students embraces social structures and institutions that perpetuate violence and societal conflicts such as poverty, racism, sexism and homophobia. Oppression evident is made to students, and they are urged to denounce the factors for societal conflicts. The students are taught about multiple aspects of democratic citizenship including social, environmental, economic and political responsibilities. Clear distinction is made between democracy and capitalism. A clear illustration on how consumption practices and international policies affect human relations and the environment is spelt out. Capacity to learn about and facilitate pro-active responses to conflicts, including contentious issues and tolerance for uncertainty with open processes, thereby allowing students to explore multiple ways of approaching tasks, including conflict resolution are developed. Students are encouraged to create social and environmental action projects in response to community, national and global conflicts. Emphasis is made on responsibility for peace building and nonviolence in all settings by proactively addressing intrapersonal and systemic problems. Unresolved learning issues of teacher candidates, including use of Positive conflict management skills are persistently addressed. Recognition and affirmation of the use of peace-building and peace-making strategies in the classes are made.

Peace education and human rights taught to students are closely linked activities that complement and support each other. Peace is a fundamental pre-condition without which rights cannot be realized, while at the same time, the ensuring of basic rights is essential to bringing about peace. Rights education usually includes the component of learning about the provisions of international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Students are encouraged to understand the impact of rights violations, both at home and abroad, and to develop empathy and solidarity with those whose rights have been denied. Human Rights education encourages the development of skills that enable students to act in ways that uphold and promote their rights. It also addresses the responsibilities that come with the rights.

Teachers in CCSPC promote life skills education to enable young people to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into action. It promotes the development of a wide range of skills that help the young people cope effectively with the challenges of everyday life, enabling them to become socially and psychologically competent. Life skills include cooperation, negotiation, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, coping with emotions, self-awareness, empathy, critical and creative thinking, dealing with peer pressure, and awareness of risk, assertiveness, and preparation for the world of work.

Conflict resolution skills, which are a component of many peace education programmes in the CCSPC, are an important category of life skills. Many life skills employed by the CCSPC teachers are generic in that they are applied to a number of specific contexts. For example, they use negotiation skills in resolving conflict between peers. Decision-making skills are used in arriving at a mutually agreeable solution to a dispute between two people, or in making health-related choices such as deciding whether to smoke or engage in a sexual relationship. The teachers emphasize life skills education on developing attitudes and values, and translating those changes into observable behaviours, as an important perspective to incorporate into peace education programmes.

Cotabato City State Polytechnic College have a strong and consistent whole-school behaviour management system in place. Schools have strong transition programmes at different stages of schooling, to ensure that students develop a readiness to enter their new environment, to reduce anxiety and to increase resilience.

The Effects of Peace Education on Students and the Civil Society:

Education is the key factor affecting the way we see the world. While many factors affect our consciousness and worldview, such as our genetics, our family life, our religion, and our community, the one factor that is the key is our formal schooling. Informal education through our parents, extended families, communities, media, and places of worship, has a profound impact on our worldview. School is where most children spend their time, and if the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for creating a culture of peace is brought into the formal curriculum and school life, the change it makes is enormous.

Peace education has raised the profile of peace-making, peace building and conflict management in the school within CCSPC community. One of the teachers said that all along he had thought that the role of promoting peace in the community was the work of the chief and the police but he had realized the important role that he could play as a teacher in initiating peace in school and the community by extension. The Peace Education Programme has provided an avenue for the education fraternity in CCSPC to ventilate emotions and views. This has resulted in improved relationships in school community. The Peace Education Programme has enabled skills and values associated with peaceful behaviours to be taught. The programme has enabled and encouraged students to think constructively about issues, both physical and social and to develop constructive attitudes towards living together and solving problems that arise in their schools and communities through peaceful means. The programme has allowed the learners to practice these skills and helped them discover the benefits for themselves so that they psychologically 'own' the skills and behaviours.

The essence of peace education is transformation of the student, and ultimately, society. The total transformation of society and the economic and social order is integral to peace, as the current economic and social order is rife with physical and structural violence. The CCSPC teachers have created a culture of peace by initiating fundamental change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and worldview, which has enabled the learners to take action for a more peaceful environment thus playing a role in societal transformation.

There is no single mode of transformative learning, and as different students learn best in different ways, the varied approaches the teachers use to encourage perspective peace has changed the students from a culture of war to a culture of peace. The teachers have internalized transformative concepts themselves and effectively convey them to their students. They emphasize that they have to be the change that they want to see in the society and therefore, they must be the change that they want to see in their students. Through critical thinking teachers have encouraged dialogue and questioning, and through more creative and emotional processes such as artistic activities. This has led to transformation and individual students have changed their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously constituting and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds.

Learning for change is absolutely critical to the process of peace education. Knowledge, behaviours, and actions are influenced by worldview, and must change in order to shift towards a culture of peace. The teachers therefore, foster transformative learning, a basic necessity to peace education. Learning as a group has benefited the students in that they have the opportunity to practice what they are learning. The students take turns in teaching a lesson to the other class members. It has helped in breaking the monotony of learning theory as each day students practice teaching. This has helped them gain a better understanding of peace education in action.

5. CONCLUSION

However, though efforts have been made to mainstream peace education in school curricula, this has not been done in all the subjects. Capacity gaps are evident especially in the delivery of peace education in the classroom. Emphasis on academic subjects at the expense of value-based subjects like peace education has led to a situation where life skills is relegated to a second place and hence not given the attention it deserves in schools. Conceptualization and measurement of life skills-based programmes is a challenge due to a lack of quantifiable benchmarks. This poses a challenge in the measurement of Peace Education. Peace education initiatives through the school often lack adequate community-based interventions to support and reinforce the gains made. There is weak coordination of psychosocial interventions during violent conflicts due to lack of a proper response framework.

6. RECOMMENDATION

To ensure that it is a viable programme, it is essential that peace education is not a 'one-off' initiative but rather a well-structured and sustained programme for behaviours are not learnt instantly and if programmes to change or develop behaviours are to succeed, they must be both activity based and sustained through a structured and sustained programme.

Mainstreaming peace education into the curriculum across board during envisaged curriculum reforms is necessary for the full success of the implementation Peace Education in CCSPC. Carrying out an evaluation of the programme with the support of the Department of Education and Commission of Higher Education is necessary. Developing a measurement and monitoring framework for peace education in CCSPC is equally necessary. Finalization and launch of the Education Sector Policy on Peace

Education should be considered.

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