THE PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING PEACE IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

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Abstract: **The study evaluated the contribution of the implementation of peace education curriculum in building peace in South Central Mindanao using the descriptive-predictive research design to the randomly selected 60 respondents using Raosoft method. The study made use of mean, Pearson r Correlation and Stepwise Regressions in the analysis of data gathered. The locale of the study is three (3) Higher Educational Institutions offering Peace Education Curriculum. The (3) three schools produced hundreds of graduates in peace and development. The result revealed that the implementation of Peace Education is very highly extensive. The overall mean for extent of implementation of peace education curriculum in the attainment of peace in terms of foundation of peace and development, philosophical foundations of peace, peace research, development paradigms and culture of peace, human rights and peace, religion and global ethics towards peace and environment peace were very highly extensive. But the social justice and peace, conflict resolution management and transformation, and ethnicity and cultural solidarity were highly extensive. The extent of contribution of peace education curriculum to building peace in terms of building inner peace and building culture respect, reconciliation and solidarity were very highly evident. But the dismantling culture of war, living with compassion and social justice, living in harmony with earth and promoting human rights and responsibilities were highly evident. The correlational analysis between the implementation of peace education curriculum in the attainment of peace and its contribution to build peace revealed significant relationship. The best predictors that emerged were ethnicity and cultural solidarity, social justice and peace and conflict resolution management and transformation. The study concludes that the schools offering peace education curriculum produce individuals who are peace loving individual that manifested good moral characters and behavior with good peace leadership. The study recommended for intensification of peace education programs in the schools at all levels.**

Keywords: **Peace Education, Peace-building, Peace Curriculum, Southern Philippines.**

1. INTRODUCTION

In the present situations all over the world, it is observed that there is an increase in the amount of individuals' negative behavior as tendency towards violence and lack of tolerance and an increase in wars, conflicts and intolerance on national or international basis. In this respect, educational institutions undertake one of the most important roles for establishing social and behavioral change for achieving equality, justice, tolerance, empathy, and democracy among individuals. Therefore, due to great importance of friendship groups and relations at early ages, it is considered important to develop peace culture through peace education (Gurdogan-Bayir and Bozkurt, 2018).

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines recognizes the need and importance of peace education, due to the presence of continuous armed conflict all over the country. The efforts of the Government, through the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), has laid a strong foundation at the policy level for peace education. Galvez (2019) asserts that educating people towards becoming peace agents is central to the task of peacebuilding. Peace

education is viewed as both a significant peacebuilding strategy in the case of post-conflict situations and an effective way of preventing violent conflict.

The cultural diversity in Mindanao, which is a land of mixed faith, cultures and beliefs often experiences conflict due to it. These cultural differences in the island have caused complications and difficulties for various groups of people to know and relate with each other or live together in a community. The resulting situation tends to lend itself to misunderstanding, mistrust and mutual suspicion, or animosity. Thus, response to the feuding zones that seems to be growing violent, the implementation of peace education program is one of the expected ways to establish positive outputs (Alaya-ay, Basang, Fernandez, Sabaduquia, Sambo and Talaid, 2013).

This study described the Peace Education Curriculum and its contributions to building peace in Southern Philippines. This is deemed to determine the influence of peace education in the attainment of peace as basis to formulate intervention programs to strengthen peace education program implementation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine the peace education curriculum and its contribution to building peace in Southern Philippines

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed the descriptive-predictive research design. The descriptive aspect were the ones gathered through a survey and these consist of the extent of implementation of the peace education curriculum that helped attained the degree of peace in Mindanao and its contributions that prepared the students in building peace in Mindanao. The predictive aspect described the best predictors of the variables using statistical tools.

The data were gathered in Southern Philippines, specifically in South-Central Mindanao to include the provinces of North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat Province. This includes the City of Cotabato. These are three of the provinces where many of the peace degree graduates are currently working.

The respondent of the study were the graduates of graduate and post-graduate courses in peace and development studies in Notre Dame University, Cotabato City State Polytechnic College and Mindanao State University. Specifically, only those who were easily accessible were included. Data on the actual number of graduates of PhD PD and MAPD from school years 2012-2019 were taken from the registrar's offices, Deans or Heads of Peace Department of the three schools. At least 15-20 individuals from each school were taken as respondents. The professors and the deans were also included as sources of further information. The heads and staff of the departments of peace and development studies of the schools were also considered key informants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Schools Offering Peace Degree Programs:

There were three schools that offered Peace Degree Programs; Notre Dame University (NDU), Mindanao State University (MSU)- Maguindanao Campus and Cotabato City State Polytechnic College (CCSPC), The profile characteristics of the schools were asked to provide an idea of the nature of the schools that offer the peace degree programs. Added to the information about them is the number of peace degree program graduates the school has produced.

Based on the interviews with the deans of the graduate schools of the academic institutions, the peace education program started at Notre Dame University was a brainchild of the then NDU and Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) President, Fr. Jose Ante. CEAP sponsored the first Peace education conference in the Philippines in 1987. This gave NDU an opportunity to understand peace education and meet famous global peace educators. They met Dr. Toh Swee-Hin in this conference and had a fruitful interaction. Dr. Toh agreed to share a peace education framework of the Philippines which he developed with Dr. Virginia Cawagas. As a result of this conference, the President together with the Notre Dame University community decided to open a peace education program with two components: a) graduate program on peace education; b) Establishing a peace education Center.

It was Notre Dame University that first offered the peace degree programs. It all began with a series of Peace Education seminars conducted since 1989. In 1991, Doctor of Education EdD, Major in Peace Education was offered.

When NDU administrators and senior faculty became persuaded through workshops and seminars of the relevance and consistency of peace education to the university's vision and mission, the question was where to begin the process. While it was accepted that in the long-term, all formal and non-formal aspects of university life would need to be infused in the peace paradigm, it was felt that initially a compact, visible program of studies would serve to act as a beacon for the NDU's proposed commitment to peace education. Given resource constraints, notably the lack of university teachers who had a detailed understanding of peace and conflict issues needed for such infusion, the decision was made to start with a graduate studies program whereby NDU faculty and other interested students could receive sufficient grounding in the peace education framework. Thus, in 1987, a core program was designed for the M.A. (Education) and Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degrees, comprising some 12 courses focusing on the overall framework, as well as specific facets of a holistic concept of peace education. The latter included courses on Disarmament Education, Education for Human Rights, Global Development and Justice, Environmental Education, Ethnicity, Cultural Solidarity and Education, Active Non-Violence, Values Education, Third World Education and Development, and Religious Perspectives on Peace & Development. A Research Methodology course was also designed to better serve the needs of research in peace education, which would be more qualitatively oriented, sensitive to ethical political issues, and promote dialogue and conscientization among research subjects (e.g. participatory action research).

The initial obstacle was posed by the accreditation process, in which the Department of Education, Culture & Sports (DECS)'s approval was required for the program to proceed. The initial response of DECS officials was couched in terms of "employability" would graduates in peace education find useful jobs! Then objection to the descriptor "peace education" was voiced why not "development education", which is already a well-known area of specialization in Philippine universities. Clearly, to the DECS bureaucrats, peace education seemed exotic or non-understood. Finally, after extended negotiations, NDU was able to begin a specialization officially entitled "development and peace education" but practically referred to as "peace and development education" in NDU circles. The first enrollees were administrators (e.g. Dean Ofelia Durante) and faculty members of the College of Arts and Sciences; the Vice President of NDU, Fr. Carino; and a visiting candidate-cum-visiting professor, Virginia Floresca-Cawagas.

Putting up a library which was then a requirement by DECS for accreditation also became a major challenge. Peace education was unheard of then, resources were not available in the local and national libraries and bookstores. We pulled through with this challenge by communication with various international libraries.

The next practical challenge was posed by the teaching requirements. Thus, a mode of distance education delivery was designed: Toh would come from Australia once or twice a year to give 3-day intensive workshops for each course. Students would be left with relevant reading material which they would consult in preparation of their course assignments and requirements that could be sent to Toh for assessment or wait until his next trip back for more course-workshops.

It was only in 1993 that Master of Arts Major in Peace Education was offered. The professors interviewed shared that around 2002, EdD Major in Peace Education and Master of Arts in Education, Major in Peace Education were changed to PhD in Peace and Development and MA in Peace and Development. The next to offer was MSU-Maguindanao in 2007. However, the MSU Graduate School offers only MA PD. In 2011, the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College offered both PhD PD and MA PD. There is now a total of 181 graduates of peace degree programs of the three schools.

This data presents the activities and programs offered by the schools which helped in developing future citizens and leaders enshrined with culture of peace values.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the data gathered the following are the major findings of the study:

There were three (3) Higher Educational Institutions offering Peace Education Programs, namely: the Notre Dame University (NDU) with 90 graduates, the Mindanao State University (MSU) – Maguindanao with 50 graduates and the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College (CCSPC) with 41 graduates. The total graduates of three (3) academic institutions is about 181.

The overall mean for extent of implementation of peace education curriculum in the attainment of peace in terms of foundation of peace and development (4.54), philosophical foundations of peace (4.72), peace research (4.84), development paradigms and culture of peace (4.81), human rights and peace (4.86), religion and global ethics towards

peace (4.61) and environment peace (4.75) were very highly extensive. But the social justice and peace (4.43), conflict resolution management and transformation (3.97), and ethnicity and cultural solidarity (4.37) were highly extensive.

The extent of contribution of peace education curriculum to building peace in terms of building inner peace (4.69) and building culture respect, reconciliation and solidarity (4.79) were very highly evident. But in terms of dismantling culture of war (4.34), living with compassion and social justice (4.15), living in harmony with earth (3.96) and promoting human rights and responsibilities (4.38) were highly evident.

The correlational analysis between the implementation of peace education curriculum in the attainment of peace and its contribution to build peace revealed significant relationship. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

The best predictors that emerged were ethnicity and cultural solidarity, social justice and peace and conflict resolution management and transformation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the three (3) Higher Educational Institutions offering peace education curriculum produces individual who are peace loving individual that manifested good moral characters and behavior with good peace leadership. The integration of the human rights, social justice, peace and development philosophical foundations of peace, peace researches, environment care conflict resolution in the student's activities and lectures had helped in developing culture of peace to the students. The attainment of peace in Mindanao due to the peace education curriculum have helped in improving the culture against violence and armed conflict of many people resulting to more support for peace agreement and resolution in resolving common cause of differences which are due to difference in culture and religious beliefs and practices. The strong support of the school in environment care enriched the inner peace of many people sustaining life condition and decreasing hostility and violence in many places. Although, there are many aspects that needs more support to sustain peace still there is a good impact of the peace education curriculum in the lives of the students and community.

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