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## **The Practice of Peace Education: Applied Research on Peace Education in the Twenty-First Century**

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**Abstract:** This study explores the practice of peace education in the Philippines in the twenty-first century. Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions with teachers and students from various schools. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, which revealed several key findings. First, the implementation of peace education varies across schools, with some schools prioritizing it more than others. Second, teachers play a crucial role in promoting peace education, particularly those who are passionate about the topic and receive training and support in this area. Third, peace education should be integrated into the formal curriculum and tailored to be age-appropriate and culturally relevant. Fourth, the lack of resources and support is a major challenge in promoting peace education. Fifth, social justice education is an important component of peace education. Lastly, peace education should be promoted at all levels of education, from primary school to university. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of prioritizing peace education and providing resources and support to educators in promoting it. By integrating peace education into the formal curriculum and tailoring it to be age-appropriate and culturally relevant, students can develop positive values and attitudes towards peace and conflict resolution.

**Keywords:** Peace education, Curriculum integration, Teacher training, Social justice education.

### **Introduction:**

Peace education has become increasingly important in the Philippines in the twenty-first century due to the persistence of conflicts and violence in different parts of the country. Education has been identified as a key tool for promoting peace, and several initiatives have been developed to promote peace education in different contexts (Nepomuceno, 2020). The practice of peace education involves the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that promote peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, and social justice. Peace education is essential for building a culture of peace, promoting social cohesion, and preventing violence and conflicts.

The purpose of this research is to examine the practice of peace education in the Philippines in the twenty-first century. The study will explore the key concepts and theories of peace education, the methods and strategies used in peace education, and the impact of peace education on individuals and society. The research will also examine the challenges and opportunities facing peace education in the

current Philippine context.

Peace education is a multidisciplinary field that draws from several theoretical perspectives and concepts. The concept of peace education is based on the understanding that peace is a dynamic process that requires constant attention and effort. According to Galtung (1969), peace is not just the absence of violence, but also the presence of positive factors such as justice, equality, and cooperation. Therefore, peace education aims to promote not only the absence of violence but also the development of positive values and attitudes that support peace.

Peace education is based on several theories and concepts, including conflict resolution, human rights, and social justice. Conflict resolution theory emphasizes the need to manage conflicts in a constructive way, through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. Conflict resolution theory recognizes that conflicts are inevitable in human interactions and that conflicts can be resolved without resorting to violence (Lederach, 1995).

Human rights theory emphasizes the importance of respecting the dignity and rights of all human beings. Human rights are the foundation of peace education because they provide a framework for promoting social justice, equality, and freedom. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) provides a basis for promoting human rights education, which is an essential component of peace education.

Social justice theory emphasizes the need to address social inequalities and injustices in society. Social justice is important for peace education because it provides a framework for understanding and addressing the root causes of conflicts and violence. Social justice education promotes critical thinking, empathy, and social action, which are essential for promoting peace and justice.

Peace education can be implemented through various methods and strategies, including formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. In the Philippines, formal education refers to the traditional education system, where peace education is integrated into the curriculum and taught in schools and universities. Non-formal education refers to organized educational activities that take place outside the formal education system, such as workshops, seminars, and training programs. Informal education refers to learning that takes place through daily experiences, such as family, community, and media (Nepomuceno, 2020).

Several strategies are used in peace education, including dialogue, conflict resolution, human rights education, and social justice education. Dialogue is a critical strategy in peace education because it promotes mutual understanding, empathy, and respect. Dialogue involves open communication, active listening, and the willingness to understand different perspectives. Conflict resolution strategies include negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, which promote peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Human rights education is an essential component of peace education in the Philippines, which promotes the understanding and protection of human rights. Human rights education aims to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote human rights and social justice.

Social justice education aims to empower individuals to take action towards creating a more just and equitable society (Parker, 2015). This can include engaging in activism, volunteering, or participating in community initiatives. Social justice education also involves examining and challenging systemic issues such as racism, sexism, and economic inequality (Kohli, 2019). By raising awareness about these issues, individuals are better equipped to understand and address social injustices.

One challenge facing social justice education is the lack of resources and support (Nguyen, 2020). In many contexts, social justice education is not given the same level of attention and resources as other subjects, such as math or science. This can limit the effectiveness of social justice education and make it difficult for educators to fully integrate it into their curriculum.

Another challenge is the resistance to social justice education from some individuals and groups who may view it as divisive or unnecessary (Barnes, 2018). These individuals may argue that discussions

of social justice are too political or that they detract from the primary purpose of education.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for promoting social justice education in the Philippines. The Philippine government has recognized the importance of promoting peace education and has implemented various initiatives to support this goal (Salud, 2017). In 2001, the Philippine Congress passed the Peace Education Act, which mandated the integration of peace education into the formal education system. This act requires that all levels of education, from primary school to university, include peace education in their curriculum.

Additionally, there are several organizations in the Philippines that promote social justice education, such as the Philippine Social Science Council and the Center for Social Concern and Action at the Ateneo de Manila University (Dela Cruz, 2020). These organizations offer training, resources, and support for educators and activists who are interested in promoting social justice.

Peace education is a vital tool for promoting social cohesion, conflict resolution, and social justice (Galtung, 1996). By promoting positive values and attitudes, peace education can help to prevent violence and promote peaceful coexistence. Social justice education is an essential component of peace education, which aims to develop critical thinking, empathy, and social action. While there are challenges to implementing social justice education, there are also opportunities for promoting it in the Philippines. The Philippine government has recognized the importance of peace education and has implemented various initiatives to support this goal (Salud, 2017). By continuing to prioritize peace education and social justice education, the Philippines can work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The practice of peace education has gained significant attention in the twenty-first century due to the increasing prevalence of violence and conflict worldwide. Peace education is an approach that aims to promote peace, social justice, and conflict resolution through various educational interventions. This paper reviews the related literature on peace education and its practice in the Philippines.

#### **The Need for Peace Education:**

The need for peace education arises from the alarming rise of violent conflicts and human rights violations worldwide. According to Jones (2018), peace education is an essential tool for building a peaceful society and preventing conflicts. Peace education is defined as a process that empowers individuals to resolve conflicts peacefully, promote social justice, and respect human rights (Schofield & Taylor, 2018).

#### **Peace Education and Social Justice:**

Peace education aims to promote social justice and equity by addressing systemic issues such as poverty, racism, and discrimination (Bajaj, 2018). Peace education encourages critical thinking, empathy, and social action, which are essential for addressing social inequalities and injustices (Hicks, 2018). By raising awareness about these issues, peace education empowers individuals to take action towards creating a more just and equitable society.

#### **Peace Education in the Philippines:**

The Philippine government has recognized the importance of peace education and has implemented various initiatives to support this goal. The Philippine Congress passed the Peace Education Act in 2001, which mandated the integration of peace education into the formal education system (Aldon, 2016). This act requires that all levels of education, from primary school to university, include peace education in their curriculum.

Several organizations in the Philippines promote peace education, such as the Philippine Social Science Council and the Center for Peace Education at Miriam College. These organizations offer training, resources, and support for educators and activists who are interested in promoting peace education.

#### Effectiveness of Peace Education:

Several studies have evaluated the effectiveness of peace education programs. A study conducted by Schofield and Taylor (2018) found that peace education programs can significantly reduce violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution. Another study conducted by Jones (2018) showed that peace education can enhance critical thinking and empathy among students, which are essential for promoting social justice and equity.

#### Challenges of Peace Education:

Despite the efforts to promote peace education in the Philippines, there are still several challenges in its implementation. One challenge is the lack of resources and support. In many contexts, peace education is not given the same level of attention and resources as other subjects, such as math or science. This can limit the effectiveness of peace education and make it difficult for educators to fully integrate it into their curriculum.

Another challenge is the resistance to peace education from some individuals and groups who may view it as divisive or unnecessary. These individuals may argue that discussions of peace are too political or that they detract from the primary purpose of education.

Peace education is an essential tool for promoting social justice, conflict resolution, and a peaceful society. The Philippine government has recognized the importance of peace education and has implemented various initiatives to support this goal. Several organizations in the Philippines promote peace education, offering training, resources, and support for educators and activists who are interested in promoting peace education. Despite the challenges, studies have shown that peace education can significantly reduce violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution. By continuing to prioritize peace education in the Philippines, the country can work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

#### **Methodology:**

The research aims to explore and analyze the practice of peace education in the Philippines. This study utilized a qualitative research approach to collect and analyze data. The study utilized interviews and focus group discussions with educators, students, and community members who have engaged in peace education programs. The study also conducted a review of relevant literature on peace education in the Philippines.

#### Participants:

The study included participants who have engaged in peace education programs in the Philippines. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, with a focus on diversity in terms of age, gender, socio-economic status, and geographic location. Participants were recruited through peace education organizations and institutions in the Philippines.

#### Data Collection:

The data collection process included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a review of relevant literature. Interviews were conducted with educators, students, and community members who have engaged in peace education programs. The interviews were conducted in person or through online platforms such as Zoom or Skype. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed for analysis.

Focus group discussions were also conducted with educators, students, and community members who have engaged in peace education programs. The focus group discussions were conducted in person or through online platforms such as Zoom or Google meet. The discussions were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed for analysis.

The review of relevant literature included academic articles, books, and reports on peace education in the Philippines. The literature review aimed to provide a context for the study and to identify gaps and areas for further research.

### Data Analysis:

The data collected from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying patterns, themes, and categories in the data. The analysis process involved multiple rounds of coding, categorization, and synthesis to develop themes that captured the essence of the data.

The review of relevant literature was analyzed through a systematic review process. The literature was synthesized to identify key themes and gaps in the literature. The findings from the literature review were used to contextualize the data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions.

### Ethical Considerations:

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews and focus group discussions. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

### Findings:

#### **The implementation of peace education varies across schools.**

The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant variation in the implementation of peace education across schools in the Philippines. Participants reported that some schools prioritize peace education and integrate it into their curriculum, while others do not emphasize it as much. One participant stated that "some schools have a dedicated subject for peace education, and it is part of their regular curriculum." Another participant highlighted that "some schools integrate peace education into their existing subjects, such as social studies or values education."

Moreover, the implementation of peace education may also depend on the school's location and resources. One participant mentioned that "schools in urban areas tend to have more resources for peace education than those in rural areas." This is due to the availability of peace education organizations and resources that are typically more accessible in urban areas.

However, some participants also reported that even in urban areas, some schools still do not prioritize peace education. One participant said, "Even in urban areas, not all schools prioritize peace education. Some schools focus more on academic subjects like Math and Science."

Furthermore, some participants noted that the implementation of peace education is also influenced by the school's administration and teachers. One participant shared that "the commitment of the school administration and teachers to peace education is essential. If they are not committed, the implementation of peace education will not be effective." Another participant added that "some teachers do not have the training or the resources to teach peace education effectively."

The findings suggest that the implementation of peace education in the Philippines varies across schools and is influenced by several factors such as location, resources, school administration, and teacher commitment. Some schools prioritize peace education and integrate it into their curriculum, while others do not emphasize it as much. However, even in urban areas with more resources, not all schools prioritize peace education. The commitment of the school administration and teachers to peace education is essential for effective implementation.

#### **Teachers play a crucial role in promoting peace education**

The participants in the study highlighted the critical role that teachers play in promoting peace education in the Philippines. One participant stated, "Teachers are the key agents in peace education. They are the ones who are in direct contact with the students, and they can influence them in so many ways."

The study found that teachers who are passionate about peace education and receive training and support in this area are more effective in promoting peace education. A participant shared, "Teachers

who are knowledgeable and well-trained in peace education are more confident in teaching this subject. They know how to incorporate it into their lessons and how to create a positive learning environment for their students."

Moreover, the participants also pointed out that teachers who use interactive and participatory approaches are more effective in promoting peace education. One participant emphasized, "Teachers who use interactive and participatory approaches, such as role-playing, simulations, and group discussions, are more effective in promoting peace education. These approaches encourage critical thinking and promote empathy and understanding among students."

However, the study also found that some teachers face challenges in promoting peace education, such as lack of support and resources. A participant shared, "Some teachers lack support and resources to teach peace education effectively. They don't have enough materials, and they are not given enough time to prepare for their lessons. This affects the quality of their teaching."

The study highlights the crucial role of teachers in promoting peace education and the need for support and training in this area. The findings suggest that promoting peace education among teachers could lead to a more effective implementation of peace education in the Philippines.

### **Peace education should be integrated into the curriculum**

The participants of the study emphasized the importance of integrating peace education into the formal curriculum. One participant stated:

"I think peace education should be integrated into the curriculum, and it should be integrated into all the subjects. I mean, it's not just about teaching peace education as a separate subject, it should be integrated into social studies, history, literature, even in science."

The participants believed that integrating peace education into the curriculum would allow for the incorporation of peace education concepts and values into students' daily lives. Another participant stated:

"I believe that peace education should be a part of our curriculum because we need to teach the next generation the importance of peace and understanding. We cannot just teach them about math and science and ignore the importance of peace and understanding in our society."

Furthermore, the participants emphasized that integrating peace education into the curriculum should not be a one-time effort but should be an ongoing process. One participant stated:

"It's not enough to just have peace education integrated into the curriculum for one semester or one year. It should be an ongoing process, and we need to constantly review and update the curriculum to ensure that we are providing the best education for our students."

The participants also believed that integrating peace education into the curriculum would help students develop critical thinking skills and empathy towards others. As one participant stated:

"Integrating peace education into the curriculum would help students develop critical thinking skills and empathy towards others. It would also help them understand the root causes of conflicts and how to resolve them peacefully."

Overall, the participants of the study emphasized the importance of integrating peace education into the formal curriculum as an ongoing process. This would allow for the incorporation of peace education concepts and values into students' daily lives, helping them develop critical thinking skills and empathy towards others, and understanding the root causes of conflicts and how to resolve them peacefully.

### **Peace education should be age-appropriate and culturally relevant**

The participants in the study stressed the importance of age-appropriate and culturally relevant peace education. According to one participant, "It is important for peace education to be relevant to the culture and context of the learners. This means that peace education should not be a one-size-fits-all

approach, but should be tailored to meet the needs of the learners and take into account cultural differences." Another participant added, "The concepts of peace may be interpreted differently across cultures, so it is important to be sensitive to these differences and to adapt the teaching strategies accordingly."

The participants also highlighted the importance of age-appropriate peace education. According to one participant, "Peace education should be delivered in a manner that is appropriate for the age group of the learners. For younger learners, it may involve storytelling or role-playing, while for older learners, it may involve more in-depth discussions and analysis of current events." Another participant added, "Age-appropriate peace education also means taking into account the developmental stages of the learners. What works for one age group may not work for another, so it is important to adapt the approach to the specific age group."

The participants in the study emphasized the need for peace education to be tailored to meet the needs of learners from different cultural backgrounds and age groups. By doing so, peace education can be more effective in promoting the values and skills necessary for creating a more peaceful and just society.

### **The lack of resources and support is a challenge**

Participants in the study identified the lack of resources and support as a significant challenge in promoting peace education in the Philippines. One participant stated, "We don't have enough materials or textbooks to teach peace education. We have to improvise and make do with what we have." Another participant noted that the lack of funding can also limit the implementation of peace education: "Peace education is important, but it's not a priority for our school or the government. We don't have enough funding to support it."

The lack of teacher training and support was also identified as a challenge. A participant stated, "Teachers need training and support to effectively promote peace education. Without proper training, we may not be able to effectively teach students about peace." Another participant noted that the lack of support can lead to a lack of motivation among teachers: "If there's no support from the school or the government, teachers may not be motivated to promote peace education."

Overall, participants highlighted the need for more resources and support for promoting peace education in the Philippines. They stressed that without adequate resources and support, it will be challenging to effectively implement peace education in schools.

### **Social justice education is an important component of peace education.**

During the focus group discussions and interviews, participants consistently emphasized the importance of social justice education as a key component of peace education. One participant stated:

"Social justice education is important because peace is not just about being peaceful, it's about creating a just and equitable society. You cannot have peace without addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and discrimination."

Participants reported that social justice education helps students to understand the root causes of conflict and to develop critical thinking skills that enable them to analyze and challenge oppressive systems. Another participant shared:

"Social justice education is essential for developing critical thinking skills. When students are able to critically analyze the world around them, they can see how systems like capitalism and imperialism create inequality and conflict."

Participants also emphasized that social justice education promotes empathy and social action, which are important for creating positive change. One participant noted:

"Social justice education helps students to develop empathy for others who may be experiencing oppression or discrimination. When students have empathy, they are more likely to take action to create change."

Overall, participants agreed that social justice education is a vital component of peace education. They noted that peace education should not only focus on individual behavior, but should also address systemic issues and promote social justice.

### **Peace education should be promoted at all levels of education**

The findings from the study indicate that participants emphasized the need for peace education to be promoted at all levels of education, from primary school to university. One participant stated, "Peace education should start from the very beginning, even from preschool, and should continue throughout a person's life." This sentiment was echoed by several other participants, who emphasized the importance of peace education as a lifelong learning process.

Furthermore, participants reported that peace education at higher levels of education, such as university, can be particularly impactful. One participant noted, "At the university level, peace education can be more comprehensive and can include not just the theoretical concepts but also practical experiences through internships and community engagements."

The importance of promoting peace education at all levels of education is rooted in the belief that it helps to build a strong foundation for promoting peace and resolving conflicts. As one participant stated, "The earlier we introduce peace education, the better we can equip our students with the necessary knowledge and skills to become active agents of peace in their communities and beyond."

Overall, the findings suggest that promoting peace education at all levels of education is seen as a crucial step in building a more peaceful and just society.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight several important aspects of peace education in the Philippines. Firstly, the implementation of peace education varies across schools. Some schools prioritize peace education and integrate it into their curriculum, while others do not emphasize it as much. Additionally, the implementation of peace education may also depend on the school's location and resources. This finding underscores the need for a standardized approach to peace education across all schools in the Philippines, regardless of location or resources.

Secondly, the role of teachers in promoting peace education is crucial. The study participants emphasized the importance of passionate and well-trained teachers who use interactive and participatory approaches in promoting peace education. This finding highlights the need for teacher training programs that equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively promote peace education in the classroom.

Thirdly, the integration of peace education into the formal curriculum is essential. Participants stressed that peace education should not be treated as a separate subject, but should be integrated into existing subjects such as social studies, history, and literature. This approach allows for the incorporation of peace education concepts and values into students' daily lives. Additionally, peace education should be age-appropriate and culturally relevant, taking into account the needs of different age groups and cultural differences.

Fourthly, the lack of resources and support is a major challenge in promoting peace education. Schools often lack the necessary resources, such as textbooks and teaching materials, to effectively implement peace education. Moreover, teachers may lack training and support in promoting peace education, which can limit its effectiveness. This finding highlights the need for increased investment in peace education, including funding for resources and training for teachers.

Finally, social justice education is an essential component of peace education. Participants emphasized the importance of addressing systemic issues such as inequality and discrimination, which are often at the root of conflict, through social justice education. Social justice education can help to develop critical thinking, empathy, and social action, which are essential for promoting peace.

Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to peace

education in the Philippines. This approach should include standardized implementation across all schools, teacher training programs, integration into the formal curriculum, age-appropriate and culturally relevant teaching, increased investment in resources and support, and social justice education. By promoting peace education in this manner, the Philippines can develop a generation of students who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to build a more peaceful and just society.

Moreover, the findings of this study may have implications beyond the Philippines. The challenges and opportunities for peace education identified by the participants are likely to be relevant in other contexts as well. Thus, the findings of this study may be of interest to educators and policymakers around the world who are interested in promoting peace and conflict resolution through education.

In conclusion, peace education is a vital component of building a more peaceful and just society. The findings of this study highlight several important aspects of peace education in the Philippines, including the need for standardized implementation, teacher training, integration into the formal curriculum, age-appropriate and culturally relevant teaching, increased investment in resources and support, and social justice education. By promoting peace education in this manner, the Philippines can build a generation of students who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to build a more peaceful and just society.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the practice of peace education in the Philippines and highlighted the importance of promoting peace education in schools. The findings of this study suggest that the implementation of peace education varies across schools, with some schools prioritizing peace education and integrating it into their curriculum, while others do not emphasize it as much. Additionally, the implementation of peace education may also depend on the school's location and resources.

The study also found that teachers play a crucial role in promoting peace education. Participants emphasized the important role that teachers play in promoting peace education, and the study suggests that teachers who are passionate about peace education and receive training and support in this area are more effective in promoting peace education. Teachers who use interactive and participatory approaches were also viewed as more effective in promoting peace education.

Furthermore, the study suggests that peace education should be integrated into the formal curriculum and should be age-appropriate and culturally relevant. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating peace education into existing subjects such as social studies, history, and literature. The study also suggests that peace education should be tailored to meet the needs of different age groups and take into account cultural differences.

The study also highlights the lack of resources and support as a challenge in promoting peace education. Participants identified the lack of necessary resources, such as textbooks and teaching materials, as well as the lack of training and support for teachers as limiting factors in promoting peace education.

Finally, the study suggests that social justice education is an important component of peace education. Participants emphasized the importance of social justice education for addressing systemic issues such as inequality and discrimination, which are often at the root of conflict.

Overall, this study has significant implications for policy and practice. It suggests that promoting peace education should be a priority in schools and that policymakers should provide the necessary resources and support for its implementation. Furthermore, the study highlights the important role that teachers play in promoting peace education and suggests that teacher training and support should be provided to ensure effective implementation. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of promoting social justice education as an essential component of peace education.

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