

Peace and Justice Education in a Private Catholic College

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Abstract

This investigation looked into the integration of peace and justice education in the general education subject of the college during the second semester of academic year 2010-2011. It also established whether or not the integration of peace and justice education significantly varies as perceived by the students when they are grouped and compared according to age, sex and department. The descriptive research design was used. Sample size was determined using Slovin's formula. Respondents were randomly selected from the four departments of the college using simple random sampling. Frequency, percentage, mean and the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) facilitated the analysis of data. Result of the study disclosed that, respondents had ages below 18 years and majority were female and from the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. The integration of peace and justice education was "very high". The college students when grouped as to age, sex and department did not differ significantly as to their perceived integration of peace and justice education. Activities and strategies to maintain the high extent of integration of the peace and justice education, inclusion of such should be reflected in the syllabi and such should be promoted. Likewise, the same should be integrated in professional subjects across all programs.

Introduction

The core values of peace and justice are fundamental to the development of individual and society. According to UNESCO in their manual entitled *Values across the Curriculum*, peace is not only the absence of war but also the presence of positive life-affirming values and structures. It implies far more than a mere absence of physical direct violence. It encompasses other values such as respect for the human rights, tolerance, active non-violence, cooperation and social responsibility (2005).

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines on its Pastoral Letter avers that one of the demands of justice is the conservation and construction of our physical environment. Justice requires the person's earthly city be truly habitat worthy of the person. As the center and master of all creation, the human being is the administrator of the things of the world. Any neglect or outright misuse of the material things strikes directly against the person's vocation and therefore is unjust. The person should urgently be convinced that the world was made for him or her community. Earthly good are meant to promote the total perfection of the human being. Consequently, the egoistic appropriation of created goods, of the goods of production of individuals or by any group is unjust. Material goods then are a universal destiny, and this the basis of the right to work and to property (CBCP, 1978).

Grounded in Catholic social teaching and committed to respect for other worldviews and faiths, La Consolacion College Bacolod with its new vision mission of aspiring to become a top Catholic university is tasked to objectify its mission of working for peace, justice and integrity of creation in this “broken world”. The present thrust of the

college which is to build a community where peace, justice and integrity of creation reign becomes a philosophy and a way of life where these values are engaged in learning activities of the institution. As an institution of higher learning, La Consolacion College Bacolod should openly espouse and teach justice and peace to its students. It should be actively pursued both by teachers and students in all parts of its educational system, following an interdisciplinary approach in order to become integrated in their way of life.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the extent of integration of peace and justice education among the general education subjects in a private catholic college in Bacolod city. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: (a) What is the profile of the respondents when grouped according to age, sex and department? (b) What is the extent of integration of the peace and justice education in the General Education subjects as perceived by the college students in terms of respect for human rights, equality and tolerance, active non-violence and cooperation, social responsibility, democracy, active and responsible citizenship, interdependence, unity in diversity, international understanding, and global peace. (c) What is the significant difference in the extent of integration of the peace and justice education in the general education subjects when grouped and compared to the aforementioned variables? (d) What measures can be done to integrate peace and justice education in the general education curriculum?

Methodology

The study made use of descriptive quantitative method. In gathering data, survey questionnaires were utilized. The instrument was adopted from UNESCO-APNIEVE questionnaire on peace and justice issues. The respondents of this study were the students who enrolled in the general education subjects.

Frequency distribution and percentage was used to determine the profile of the respondents when grouped according to the variables. In identifying the extent of integration of peace and justice education in the general education subjects the mean was utilized. ANOVA was used to determine the extent of integration of the peace and justice education of the general education students when they were grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the resolution of the Padua Conference of Catholic moral theologians from around the world who took part in the first international cross-cultural conversations on theological ethics. Hogan (2006) referred to the conference as “the desire to bring together the manifold conversations that together embody the diversity of the Catholic moral tradition”. The conference reflected and discussed on issues such as poverty, inequalities, violence and environmental destruction. Not only were the ethical challenges passed and analyzed but the discussions were focused on the role of the church's moral traditions, both as a voice or protest and of prophetic insights. Issues on peace (war and peace, gender, marriage and sexuality), and justice were the focused of the current investigation especially on how those issues and values are integrated in the general

education curriculum of a tertiary level institution. According to Narsee (2005) it is more than a provision of information, it is a life-long, valued-based process of improving knowledge and action within the framework of the principles of international instruments of human rights. Education of future citizens needs to be redressed so that a better balance is achieved between academic excellence and human values and moral perceptions. The making of moral citizens must mean persons with “human excellence” (Narsee, 2005). Likewise, single-minded focus on economic growth and globalization over much of the 20th and 21st centuries has led to an erosion of human values (Galtung, 2003, Lasonen, 2003, Lickonia, 1993 as cited by Narsee, 2005). The alarming scenario of youth violence, pornography and a total disregard for authority in the Philippines and the world has spawned a growing interest and awareness in establishing peace institutes and centers all over the world.

According to the Values, Education and Democracy Report of the Department of Education of South Africa (2000), an educational system does not exist to simply serve a market, important as that may be for economic growth and material prosperity. Its primary purpose must be to enrich the individual. Hence, the report further avers that “well rounded educational development requires the advancement of the intellect and emotional maturation of the individual.” The same report also noted that “the present educational system has groomed people for a legendary appetite for need-based knowledge and tuned us to feast on success” (2000).

In Anderson's article (2007), she noted that the need to teach peace has never been greater. Increase exposure to the violence contained in video and computer games and

television programs. Children's literature and toys more frequent episodes of bullying in schools and communities and the continuation of armed conflicts around the globe have left many children desensitized about war and violence. She believes a pedagogical perspective on peace should be infused in every subject that will engage learners in cultivating a culture of peace and non-violence. Baker, Martin and Pence (2008) has seen the efficacy of integrating peace studies in the teacher education programs of James Madison University. However, only a handful of subjects such as Children's literature, Social Studies Methods Course and Creativity and the Arts in Elementary Education have incorporated peace education in their syllabi. The researchers believe that many teachers are already practicing peace education without calling it by name.

On the effect of peace curriculum upon the students, Berge (2010) sought to discover the students' understanding of nonviolence and how the curriculum empowers them to become peacemakers. The findings revealed that students demonstrated a deeper understanding of non-violence after studying a nonviolence unit in the class. On the other hand, Turpin (2008) revealed that one of the persistent issues in teaching peace and peace studies has been addressing the emergence of guilt, anger and despair as course content challenges students and faculty to relinquish self-understanding, historical understandings of their religious traditional and national context.

This study is also anchored on the principles of UNESCO in its declaration of the decade of peace and the promotion of the culture of peace. Though peace studies have become commonplace in American universities,

insights on the Baker and colleagues' study (2008) have revealed that the same integration could also be adopted in Philippine schools.

Results and Discussion

Results of the study disclose that generally, respondents had ages below 18 years and majority were female from the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

The perceived extent of integration of peace and justice education issues was rated “very high” regardless of their selected characteristics or variables. This finding was supported by UNESCO-APNIEVE's proposition that justice is very much related to peace. It is, in fact a corner stone of peace. Hence, the fundamental equality of all is a major concern (2005). Furthermore, later study was reaffirmed by Tideman (1997) where the same conceptualization of peace recurred; peace is more than armistice, more than the cessation of violence. It is unity in harmony. In peaceful world, people are all pleased to cooperate with one another. As to the extent of integration of peace and justice education issues it was rated “very high” which is the highest extent possible in the study. Maybe the result is “very high: because they have been already exposed to the program for quite some time. Results also affirmed the UNESCO Manual entitled Values across the Curriculum, avers that, peace is not only the absence of war but also the presence of positive life-affirming values and structures. It implies far more than a mere absence of physical direct violence, tolerance, active non-violence, cooperation and social responsibility (2005).

The results were moreover supported by Berge (2010) who sought to discover the students' understanding of

non-violence and how the curriculum empowers them to become peacemakers. The findings revealed that students demonstrated a deeper understanding of non-violence after studying a nonviolence unit in the class. The current investigation was also reaffirmed by the Turpin (2008) study that revealed that one of the persistent issues in teaching peace and peace studies has been addressing the emergence of guilt, anger, despair as course content which challenges students and faculty to relinquish self-understanding, historical understanding of their religious, traditional and national context.

Finally, the respondents did not differ significantly as to their perceived extent of integration of peace and justice education issues when they were grouped and compared according to variables used in the study. The result was also supported by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), averred that one of the demands of justice is the conservation and construction of physical environment. As the master of creation, the human being is the master of the things of the world. (CBCP, 1988). More importantly, the current study together with Baker and others (2008) have seen the efficacy of integrating peace studies in the teacher education programs of American universities especially incorporating them in their syllabi.

Conclusions

From the foregoing results, the following conclusions can be drawn. Generally, the extent of integration of peace and justice education in the general education curriculum was rated “very high.” Regardless of age, sex and department where the college students belong had no bearing on their perceived extent of integration of peace and justice education in the general education curriculum. This was true when their variables of age and sex were taken into consideration.

In the light of the aforementioned conclusions, the researchers recommend that to maintain the high extent of integration of the peace and justice education among the general education curriculum, inclusion in such should be reflected in the syllabi. The administration should also take an active role in disseminating issues on peace and justice through varied informational campaign posted in various conspicuous corners of the campus. Furthermore, monitoring and implementation of such should be vigilantly done by the chair of the Social Sciences and the dean of the college and the same could also be applied in professional subjects across all disciplines. Future researchers who might be interested in the study could also include other variables such as economic status, religious affiliations and type of school.

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