



The Role of Peace Education in Cultivating Tolerance and Conflict Resolution in Schools

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Abstract

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Peace education serves as a strategic instrument in building a harmonious, just, and inclusive society, particularly within the context of cultural pluralism and potential social conflict. This article aims to analyze how schools can instill values of tolerance, conflict resolution skills, and proactive character development as agents of peace. Based on a literature review of empirical studies, it was found that the integration of peace values into the curriculum, teacher training, the use of participatory pedagogy, and institutional as well as policy support are essential elements in ensuring the effectiveness of peace education. The findings indicate that the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students must be developed simultaneously so that individuals can understand, internalize, and act according to peace values. The results also show that conflict can be constructively managed through mediation, dialogue between students and teachers, and participatory conflict-resolution methods. This article concludes that peace education is not merely the absence of violence but the development of social culture and structures that support justice, empathy, and active engagement.



1. Introduction

Education plays a highly strategic role in building a culture of peace because through the educational process, every individual learns the values of tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and the skills to resolve conflicts constructively. Therefore, education functions as a means of social transformation toward a harmonious, just, and responsible society (Zainal et al., 2021). Peace education not only plays a role in reducing the potential for violence but also encourages the birth of a young generation who think critically and act as positive agents of change who uphold equality and cooperation across differences. The relationship between education and culture is an essential foundation for realizing a peaceful society. Education functions as a process of enculturation that inherits social values and norms, while culture becomes the source of material and the direction of educational goals (Ratu et al., 2019).

In this context, culture determines the aspects deemed important to be taught, while education plays a role in transforming culture to remain relevant to social changes and technological advancements (Halai & Durrani, 2018). Thus, education and culture need to work synergistically to instill peace values that are contextual and applicable in community life. However, the low public awareness of the meaning of positive peace remains the main challenge in realizing harmonious social life. Positive peace is not only defined as the absence of violence but also includes the principles of social justice, equality, and trust in institutions that support social harmony (Zainal et al., 2021). When society only understands peace in the negative sense namely, limited to the absence of physical violence the potential for social

conflict, intolerance, and information polarization can increase. Research in Aceh shows that the low understanding of the concept of positive peace impacts the emergence of inter-group divisions and a decrease in the level of social trust (Zainal et al., 2021). To overcome this, open dialogue, multicultural education, and strong human rights enforcement in educational environments are needed.

Furthermore, teachers as agents of peace often have not received optimal support to integrate peace values into the learning process. The findings of Halai and Durrani (2018) reveal that teachers in Pakistan can only function as agents of social cohesion if they are given space to innovate and receive structural support from educational institutions. A similar condition is also found in Indonesia, where teacher training on peace education is still limited, and the curriculum has not explicitly accommodated the theme of peace (Marliana et al., 2021). However, the role of teachers is central in shaping students' awareness of peace values and the ability to resolve conflicts through dialogical communication. Based on the peace education model developed by Ratu et al. (2019), the learning process should cover three main domains: the cognitive domain which focuses on understanding conflict and peaceful solutions; the affective domain which emphasizes the development of caring attitudes, empathy, and tolerance; and the psychomotor domain which leads to the ability to act peacefully in daily life.

Through the development of these three domains, students not only understand the concept of peace theoretically but are also able to apply it practically. Furthermore, peace education has three main goals: conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and creating social conditions that support sustainable peace (Krampe et

al., 2021). Prevention efforts are carried out through character education, communication training, and the implementation of multicultural learning. Conflict resolution is oriented towards the ability to negotiate and mediate between parties, while the creation of conducive social conditions is achieved through building trust and applying the principles of social justice in the school environment (Ritter et al., 2018).

Thus, peace education should become an integral component in both national and regional education policies. Schools function not only as academic institutions but also as social laboratories for instilling sustainable peaceful behavior. Based on this framework, this article presents the results of a literature review on the practice of peace education in schools, covering the role of teachers, pedagogical strategies, curriculum integration, and its influence on the formation of individuals as agents of peace.

2. Methods

This research method employs a literature review approach with the main objective of collecting, analyzing, and evaluating various empirical findings regarding peace education that have been published in scientific journals. This review is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how peace education is implemented in school environments and the factors that influence its effectiveness.

First, the literature search process was carried out using academic search engines, especially Google Scholar, using a number of selected keywords, including “peace education in schools”, “teacher professional development peace education”,

“conflict resolution education”, “school culture peace Indonesia”, and “classroom climate and peace education”. The search was limited to articles published in the last five years and available in both English and Indonesian. The selection of this period aims for the review results to describe the current conditions and trends in the development of peace education in various contexts.

Second, the article selection stage was carried out using strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included: (a) articles focusing on the implementation of peace education in schools or formal educational institutions; (b) articles explicitly discussing the role of teachers, curriculum, learning strategies, or relevant forms of intervention; and (c) articles using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research approaches accompanied by empirical data. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria included articles that were theoretical without empirical data support, publications irrelevant to the context of formal education, and popular writings that did not go through the peer review process. The selection process was conducted to ensure that only articles meeting academic standards and making substantial contributions were included in this review.

Third, data collection from the selected articles was carried out by compiling a summary table containing the main information from each study, covering: author name, year of publication, research location, study focus (such as peace values, learning strategies, teacher training, or impact on students), the research method used, and the key findings of each study. This approach helped systematize the data organization process and facilitated comparison between studies.

Fourth, data analysis was performed using a thematic approach. This analysis aimed to identify main patterns and themes emerging from the overall studies, including the integration of peace values into the curriculum, teacher training models, the development of students' affective-cognitive-psychomotor domains, and conflict resolution strategies in the school environment. Through this thematic approach, a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in peace education approaches across various social and cultural contexts was obtained.

Fifth, conclusions and implications were drawn through a synthesis process of the thematic findings, which were then compared with peace education theory and relevant classic literature. This step was intended to assess the extent to which the latest research results support, expand, or challenge existing theories. By applying this structured and systematic literature review method, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of peace education practices, while also providing academic recommendations for the development of educational policies and practices that are more oriented toward peace values in schools.

3. Results

The results of the literature review on various scientific articles indicate that the practice of peace education in schools displays patterns, approaches, and challenges that are relatively similar across various contexts, both in Indonesia and globally. Generally, the research findings can be grouped into four major themes: the role of teachers and professional training, integration of peace values into the

curriculum and school climate, implementation of participatory learning methods, and student learning outcomes as agents of peace.

The role of teachers as agents of peace is a central factor in the successful implementation of peace education. A study conducted in Aceh revealed that peace-oriented teacher training helps educators understand and internalize these values in daily learning practices (Wahyudin, 2018). Teachers who receive special training show a greater tendency to instill the values of empathy, appreciation for difference, and the ability to use a mediation approach when facing conflict in the classroom (Marliana et al., 2021). Halai and Durrani (2018) emphasize that teachers should be viewed not only as curriculum implementers but also as social actors who have a strategic role in building social cohesion in the community environment. Thus, teacher capacity is determined not only by pedagogical ability but also by moral and social awareness formed through peace education.

The integration of peace values into the curriculum is proven to have a significant impact on the formation of a harmonious and inclusive classroom climate. The findings of Kurniadi et al. (2019) show that schools implementing the peaceful classroom model experienced a decrease in aggressive student behavior and a tangible increase in inter-group cooperation. The application of peace values is done by linking learning topics with social values such as empathy, mutual cooperation, justice, and peaceful communication. A school culture that prioritizes mutual respect, active participation, and shared responsibility is proven to strengthen the effectiveness of the peace education program. Integrating peace values into the

curriculum structure functions not only as moral instruction but also as an instrument for sustainable character building and social awareness.

Participatory learning methods are the most effective pedagogical strategies for increasing peace awareness among students. Research findings conducted by Ritter et al. (2018) and Foster et al. (2019) show that methods such as role-playing, peer mediation, collaborative projects, and reflective dialogue are able to shape students' emotional experiences in facing real conflict situations. Through direct involvement, students learn to understand others' perspectives, foster empathy, and develop constructive conflict resolution skills. This approach also contributes to the development of the psychomotor domain, where peace values are applied through concrete actions in daily social interactions. In other words, participatory learning creates space for students to experience, reflect on, and apply peace practically within the context of the school and the community.

Student learning outcomes as agents of peace show consistent improvement in the three main learning domains. From a cognitive perspective, students demonstrate a deeper understanding of the concepts of peace, social justice, and human rights (Kurniadi et al., 2019). In the affective domain, students experience an increase in empathy, tolerance, and a sense of social responsibility towards others (Foster et al., 2019). Meanwhile, in the psychomotor domain, students become more active in addressing small conflicts in the school environment through mediation and dialogue (Marliana et al., 2021). These findings align with Tolers's view (2019), which asserts that peace education will be effective if students' learning experiences integrate the aspects of thinking, feeling, and acting in a unified manner. Thus, peace

education not only forms cognitive understanding but also builds emotional awareness and tangible actions that reflect peace values.

Besides internal school factors, the review results also highlight the importance of structural support and school organizational culture in supporting the successful implementation of peace education. The commitment of school leaders and a collaborative culture among teachers have a significant contribution to the success of the peace education program (Wahyudin, 2018). A school environment that fosters a sense of safety, trust, and openness becomes the main foundation for the development of peace-based pedagogical innovation. Conversely, schools with rigid bureaucratic structures tend to face obstacles in implementing dialogical and collaborative approaches. Thus, peace education demands a change in institutional paradigm from an authoritarian model to a participatory model that is oriented toward democratic values.

In terms of implementation challenges, various studies identify a number of key obstacles that require serious attention. First, the limited resources and lack of professional training for teachers cause the implementation of peace education not to run consistently in various schools (Marliana et al., 2021). Second, national education policy has not explicitly included standards for implementing peace values in the curriculum, so its execution heavily depends on the initiative of individuals or specific educational institutions. Third, cultural resistance and low community support also become obstacles in developing peace education in regions with high levels of intolerance (Kurian & Kester, 2019). These obstacles emphasize the need

for a cross-sector approach involving schools, government, and local communities to create an educational ecosystem that supports the realization of a culture of peace.

Nevertheless, all studies agree that sustainable intervention yields the most significant results for changes in behavior and school culture. Repeated training programs, the integration of peace values across all subjects, and active support from the school community are proven to result in long-term attitude changes in students (Duckworth et al., 2019). Peace education, therefore, needs to be understood as a continuous process that demands long-term commitment, not as an incidental, ceremonial activity. Consistency in teacher training, curriculum updates, and strengthening school culture are key factors in ensuring the sustainability of the results obtained.

The results of this review affirm that peace education in schools plays a strategic role as an instrument for forming an inclusive, just, and sustainable social culture. Teachers and students function as active subjects in this social transformation process. Schools that systematically instill peace values not only create a safe and supportive learning environment but also give birth to a generation with the moral awareness to maintain social harmony. In a broader context, the practice of peace education also strengthens the foundation of a democratic society that upholds justice, diversity, and collective well-being. Therefore, peace education needs to be viewed as an integral part of the national education system and a strategy for sustainable human development.

4. Conclusion

From the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that peace education in formal schools is a crucial instrument in forming a culture of positive peace in society. Key elements of success are the combination of integrating peace values into the curriculum, professional training and development for teachers to enable them to teach with participatory methods and explicit values, and the simultaneous development of students' affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains. The local context and school culture are also highly influential, especially in post-conflict regions, where an approach sensitive to trauma and historical experience can strengthen the acceptance and sustainability of the intervention.

Nevertheless, there are challenges that need to be addressed for peace education to be more effective: limited resources, lack of policy and school management support, pressure from teacher workloads, and cultural resistance in the community towards value changes. Therefore, practical recommendations include: strengthening teacher training as agents of peace, curriculum revision so that peace values become a formal part, the use of participatory learning methods, and continuous collaboration between the school, parents, and the community. With a holistic approach and the understanding that education is not just the transfer of knowledge but also the transformation of culture and values, schools can become agents of change for a solid peace not just negative peace but positive peace social, structural, and sustainable.

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