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Peace Education and Training: Pedagogical and Cultural Perspectives and Theories

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of

Samira NAIR

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Peace Education and Training:
Pedagogical and Cultural Perspectives and Theories

Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution organized The International Conference on "Peace Education and Training: Pedagogical and Cultural Perspectives and Theories" in Rabat on November 12-13, 2024

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessings be upon our Lord, the Messenger of Allah, upon his Family and upon companions.

Address by Dr. Abdelhamid Achak

Director of Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution

Delivered at the Conference on:

"The Importance of Education and Training for Peace Amid Contemporary International Tensions"

Your Excellency, the Vice President of *Al-Qarawiyyīn* University;

Your Excellency, the Deputy Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO);

Honorable speakers and distinguished participants in this conference;

Esteemed coordinators, Professor Dr. Samira Nair and Professor Dr. Amal Sfaïra;

Dear colleagues and professors;

Dear students;

Distinguished guests;

May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you, all!

It gives me immense pleasure, both personally and on behalf of all the members of *Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution*, to extend to our distinguished guests a most heartfelt welcome on the occasion of this international conference devoted to the theme: *"The Importance of Education and Training for Peace Amid Contemporary International Tensions."*

I wish all participants every success in their deliberations, discussions, and reflections as they seek effective avenues and practical means for confronting the existential challenges threatening the culture of peace and peace education at this critical moment in human history.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The concept of peace education denotes a comprehensive educational approach, integrated within coherent and systematic processes aimed at cultivating, embodying, and practicing a culture of peace.

The institutions most directly concerned with this endeavor are, in broad terms, those devoted to education, culture, and communication, and more particularly educational institutions themselves, insofar as they constitute the most suitable environment for formulating systems, programs, and policies that establish peace as a supreme value for individuals, communities, and social institutions alike—embracing its cognitive, emotional, and practical dimensions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace education rests upon a set of foundational principles and conceptual premises. Yet, according to the educational thinker Ian Harris, its essential roots ultimately derive from three indispensable principles. *The first* is that peace education enables us to understand the roots of violence. *The second* is that it guides us toward alternatives to violence. *The third* is that the very concept of peace can, in most cases, only be understood within its broader context.

For when we speak of peace in general terms, we do so in two senses: a negative sense, signifying the absence of war, and a positive sense, denoting the absence of violence and conflict. Yet despite this distinction, the concept of peace remains profoundly abstract.

The Scottish philosopher and theologian John Macquarrie described it as a metaphysical concept, observing that it "defies precise definition—not because of a lack of information, but because the concept itself possesses such profound depth that the more we uncover within it, the more it calls for further exploration; and the more we understand it, the more it demands deeper understanding." (*The Concept of Peace,* p. 63)

Accordingly, many specialists have concluded that peace education is not concerned solely with the concept of peace itself; rather, it also entails uncovering the intersections between various themes and issues across diverse contexts, including conflict, post-conflict realities, and peacebuilding.

Moreover, peace education is not a matter confined to educational institutions or to a particular age group. It is, rather, a continuous process of thorough learning aimed at understanding the roots of problems and developing the necessary skills to address them.

There are, likewise, numerous approaches to implementing peace education, among them citizenship education, civic education, adult education and civic conduct, the cultivation of peaceful schools, the study of structural and cultural violence, and the development of academic research exploring concepts of peace across diverse contexts.

Hence, the theme of this international conference acquires paramount importance insofar as it seeks to uncover innovative intellectual programs capable of generating constructive forms of knowledge conducive to coexistence, reverence for life, and respect for human dignity; to the rejection of violence in all its forms; and to commitment to the principles of citizenship, the constructive management of difference, and shared coexistence—principles that constitute the very foundation of the higher universal objectives around which religions and civilizations have historically revolved.

Transcendence lies at the very heart of religions and forms the cornerstone of the moral and legislative edifice established by the prophets and messengers (Peace be upon them all). It stands in direct opposition to selfishness, greed, violence, vengeance, and conflict.

Some sages have observed that transcending the self and empathizing with others constitute the very first step upon the path of transcendence—a path called love.

In the Holy *Qur'ān*, Allah (Exalted in Might be He) says**: "For that reason We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption in the land, it is as though he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves one, it is as though he has saved all mankind."** And He, Glorified and Exalted be He, also says: **"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to all the worlds."**

Along the same lines, the Persian sage and poet Shams al-Dīn Shirāzī observed that through the language of human love we learn how to interpret the vocabulary of divine love.

Invoking such texts, distinguished guests, enables us to explore a universal language that affirms the inviolability of human dignity and the enduring force of moral values as universal characteristics shared by all humanity.

We remain firmly convinced that religions, through their sacred texts and firmly established principles, contain abundant foundations calling for coexistence, respect for difference, and unconditional compassion toward the humanity of others. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to emphasize the practical role of religion through intellectual programs administered with rigorous methodology and grounded in clear and definitive principles affirming respect for others and the dignity of the human person, while also training students in communication, dialogue, and genuine tolerance through workshops and field-based experiences.

In conclusion, peace education today must move beyond the language of generalities and slogans toward precise theoretical and practical measures that are concrete, actionable, and capable of implementation. Such measures can contribute meaningfully to confronting real-world challenges and bringing about profound transformations in the structure of human relations, thereby restoring to educational programs their effectiveness and their capacity to foster serenity, communication, and stability across the various spheres of human life.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me once again to extend to you all my warmest welcome and to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to everyone who contributed to bringing this symposium to fruition.

My heartfelt thanks go to the two esteemed coordinators, whose dedicated efforts in organizing and preparing this conference are deeply appreciated.

My sincere thanks also go to all the participating professors and researchers who enriched this gathering through their valuable scholarly contributions.

I likewise extend my gratitude to Dr. Ahmed Senouni, Assistant Director in charge of Scientific Research, Cooperation, and Partnerships; to Dr. Abdellah Errachdi, Assistant Director in charge of Studies and Training; as well as to Dr. Mohamed El yaalaoui, Secretary-General of *Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution*, together with all the administrative staff, each deserving sincere recognition and appreciation.

My renewed and heartfelt thanks also go to our honored guests.

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Translated by Pr. Samira Nair

Foreword

In a world increasingly marked by conflict and misunderstanding, the call to teach peace has never been more urgent. Peace is not merely the absence of violence or conflict; it is a way of thinking, a deliberate choice which requires critical reflection on injustice and a commitment to nonviolence not only in action but also in thought. In this sense, peace becomes a daily practice which must be sustained through education. This belief guided the vision of our conference on Peace Education and Training: Pedagogical and Cultural Perspectives and Theories held at Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution in Rabat on November 12-13, 2024. Inspired by the compelling words of Betty Reardon "Peace does not come with our DNA. To reach peace, we need to teach peace.", this conference gathered researchers, educators, civil society, and students to collectively explore what it truly means to teach peace especially in a time when unrest, injustice and misunderstanding seem to dominate global discourse. Her words resonate deeply in a world where conflict often overshadows dialogue, and where teaching peace has become an essential pillar for any effort to foster lasting harmony and justice.

Within this framework, Peace education becomes a transformative process that seeks to instil in learners the values, skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary to foster harmony and peace within themselves, in their communities, and globally. Rooted in moral and pedagogical responsibility, peace education aims to build a sustainable culture of peace by nurturing empathy towards others and encouraging open and respectful dialogue across differences. Likewise, it promotes critical awareness of injustice and inequality, and empowers learners to take ethical action in their communities and beyond.

The papers presented in this volume reflect a rich diversity of perspectives and approaches. From theoretical reflections and inquiries to practical classroom methodologies and community engagement models, the contributions explore the many dimensions of peace education. Participants shared case studies and classroom experiences, offering concrete models for nurturing a culture of peace among students. Collectively, they contribute to the ongoing project of peacebuilding by offering diverse, context-sensitive, and innovative approaches to peace education. Each contribution deepens our understanding of how peace

education transforms the classroom from a space of instruction into a platform for ethical reflection. By doing so, the papers underscored the importance of integrating peace values into broader curricula, and highlighted innovative practices that can foster these values in the learning experience.

This conference transcended mere exchanges of ideas, it became a gathering of minds and hearts, a quiet communion of hope, where shared vision, thoughtful dialogue was braided with conscience, and determination to pursue justice, empathy, compassion, and understanding through educational practice. The discussions revealed a shared understanding that education, at its best, is not neutral; it either empowers or transforms and prepares learners to be responsible agents of change.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I extend my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to all those who made this conference possible: our sincere thanks go to the Director of the institution for his unwavering support, encouragement, and stewardship, to the Assistant Director in charge of Scientific Research, Cooperation, and Partnerships for his tireless commitment to scholarly excellence and inter-institutional collaboration; to the Assistant Director in charge of Studies and Training for his thoughtful guidance and facilitation; and Secretary-General of Dar El Hadith El Hassania Institution for his encouragement and steadfast oversight. Their combined dedication was instrumental in shaping the spirit and success of this conference, and their belief in the transformative power of peace education continues to guide and inspire us.

I sincerely thank all participants for generously sharing their reflections, and insights throughout this conference. Their thoughtful contributions enriched our perspectives and demonstrated the power of open dialogue in advancing the goals of peace education. I am equally grateful to students who brought not only fresh perspectives, but also an authenticity rooted in lived experience and an urgency born of the world they are inheriting. Their questions were probing, and their reflections honest. Their insights challenged our assumptions, enriched our discussions, and reminded us that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but active partners in the pursuit of a more peaceful world.

The proceedings contained herein are more than a record; they are a roadmap and a vision for continuing the work of peace education in homes, schools, and societies. Far from being a utopian ideal or an abstract academic exercise, this

conference affirmed that peace education is both an urgent need and a tangible possibility. The discussions and shared commitments that unfolded during these two days revealed that cultivating peace is a responsibility rooted in the present, grounded in real classrooms, institutions, and communities.

If this academic event proved anything, it is that peace can be taught, learned and lived. May the echoes of this conference continue to inspire further research across educational and cultural spaces. May our work continue to enlighten minds, and fortify the path toward a more just and compassionate world.

On behalf of the organising committee
Pr. Samira Nair & Pr. Amal Sfaïra

Beyond Translation: Advocating Peace Education as a Pathway to Bridging the East-West Divide

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Abstract

The cultural and intellectual gap between East and West has long been a point of contention. A particularly illustrative case is Arabic-English translation, which is often hindered, not to say embargoed, by geopolitical and ideological constraints. Indeed, the situation of embargo that Arabic-English translation is thrown into not only limits the transfer of knowledge but also fosters misconceptions and deepens misunderstandings between East and West. The gap widens as Arabic works in philosophy, science, and the arts remain underrepresented in Western discourse. In view of this, it becomes quite challenging to say that translation can play a crucial role in promoting peace and harmony across cultures and nations. One of the most promising solutions to secure peace and harmony is indeed advocacy for peace education programs that emphasize mutual understanding, respect for diversity, and the promotion of dialogue across cultures. It is through peace education that one can foster an environment where cross-cultural communication can thrive, leading hence to the potential dismantling of stereotypes and a better understanding of 'the other'. The present paper argues that through peace education, the longstanding barriers-- Eurocentrism in particular-- that hinder the flow of ideas and knowledge between East and West can be overcome, fostering hence a future where cultural exchange is fully embraced rather than restricted, as the practice of translation amply testifies.

Key words: *Translation; culture; embargo, Eurocentrism; peace education.*

* * * * *

In his poem *"The Ballad of East and West,"* of 1889, Rudyard Kipling writes what has become a famous phrase in the literary tradition: "The West is the West and the East is the East." This line has often been interpreted as highlighting the deep cultural and civilizational hiatus between the Western and Eastern worlds. Overall, Kipling's words reflect the idea that East and West have distinct

identities, traditions, and values that make them inherently separate. His is a fundamentally Eurocentric stance, one that believes in, not to say seeks to expand and, by the same gesture glorify, the British empire. As Edward Said says in his '*The Pleasures of Imperialism*,' Rudyard Kipling's "emphases are the hallmark of the imperial culture reconfirming itself to and for itself" (Said, 1993, p. 160). Notwithstanding, the poem continues with a twist that suggests that despite these divisions, individuals can still come together and form mutual respect. Note that the line regarding East and West is derived from Psalm 103:12: "Look how wide also is the east from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us". In lines 3-4, he writes: *"*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, / When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth*!"* In this sense, while the poem initially seems to reinforce the differences between East and West, it ultimately suggests that human connection and mutual understanding can transcend those divisions. It speaks to the potential for unity despite cultural and geographical boundaries.

It is precisely within the framework of this context-- this mind-set I would say-- that the present paper orbits; it seeks to gauge to what measure the practice of translation highlights the deep cultural and civilizational differences between the Western and Eastern worlds and, by the same token, explore how peace education can contribute to bridging the gap between these two entities. The paper is thus informed by two lines of thought—a theoretical insight into the value of translation in bridging any cultural gaps obtaining between nations, including a more evidence-based insight into the status of Arabic into English (or any other foreign language) translation, and an account of how a sound peace pedagogy can serve as a substitute for when translation fails to close off the gap between East and West. In other words, through these two lines of thought, the present paper seeks to fathom to what measure the practice of translation can serve the purposes of peace education.

In general, the question whether translation can serve as a conduit to peace and harmony between peoples is met with a favorable response. In many cases, the response includes several positive arguments such as the following, *inter alia*:

1. Translation facilitates communication between people who speak different languages. Its role thus "extends far beyond mere linguistic conversion; it fosters understanding, encourages cultural exchange, and drives global progress," (Baker, 2018, p. 7) all of which is likely to foster empathy and pave the way for peaceful interactions;

2. Translation enables everyone --regardless of their language and socio-economic background-- to have access to information. It thus serves to support global sustainable development. Various UNESCO documents highlight the role that translation plays in ensuring linguistic diversity and mutual respect between nations. This same organization frequently calls for collaborators to "translate and disseminate new online courses in inclusive and equitable education," the ultimate purpose being to help develop expertise in equitable education and sustainable development (*UNESCO, 2022, ESD Section*);

3. The practice of translation allows for the bridging of linguistic gaps. It allows, by the same token, for meaningful dialogue. It is through translation that one can come to resolve conflicts and help in cementing international cooperation;

4. Translators act as mediators; nay, cultural ambassadors who "break[ing] down barriers and foster[ing] understanding between diverse communities" (Bassnett, 2014, p.138);

5. Translation can serve as a tool for both cultural exchange and political action. It can also serve as a means of resisting cultural imperialism by preserving indigenous languages, knowledge systems, and cultural practices (Baker, *op. cit*, p. 56).

There is no doubt that translation is a vital mechanism for cultural exchange and intellectual dialogue; it allows ideas and theories to travel, as Edward Said maintains in another context, (Said, *Traveling*, p**.** 237) across continents and transcend the boundaries of linguistic and socioeconomic structures.

However, the premise that the practice of translation is amenable to peace and to the dismantling of boundaries between nation needs to be revisited in light of a number of objective factors that, taken together, will shake the thought foundations of such a perspective. In theory, translation should act as a bridge between the East and West, facilitating communication and understanding. However, in practice, the volume of translation from Arabic into English (and other Western languages) remains strikingly low, which accordingly casts a shred of doubt on the merits of the practice of translation as an act of communication, let alone as a conduit to cultural exchange. Note that the Arabic language is used as a first or second language by around 400 million people worldwide and is the official language in over 20 countries, primarily in the Middle East and North Africa. It has also been one of the six official UN languages since 1973. Its contribution to world culture dates back to the period from 750 to 850 AD

when Arabic science was born, and again in the Nineteenth Century when Arabic experienced its '*nahda*;' or renaissance. Notwithstanding, Arabic language and literature remain in a situation of 'embargo' and; therefore, are unlikely to contribute in any substantial manner to any lasting peace between individual people and nations at large. The situation further widens the gap and reinforces the idea that the East and West are destined to remain culturally separate, contrary to what Rudyard Kipling seems to suggest.

The statistics relative to the situation of embargo are stark; they exemplify the magnitude of the problem and highlight the barriers that hinder the transmission of knowledge and culture between the East and the West. For instance, the 2003 Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), which is published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), states that the total number of books translated into Arabic since the time of Caliph Al-Ma'mun (9th Century) is estimated to be around 10,000, which is relatively the equivalent of the number of books that Spain translates in a single year! The report highlights the disparity in knowledge production and dissemination in the Arab world and, by the same gesture, reflects a greater need for translation should there be fewer cultural and educational gaps between the East and the West. It is my contention that for peace education to come to fruition in both worlds, there ought to be a bi-directional flow of translated works. Otherwise, to keep Arabic-English translation in embargo will certainly have dire consequences on the idea of peace between East and West. Translation; in other words, will cease to be a vehicle for understanding between nations, and the translator will no longer be a mediator for peace and cultural understanding, as the above-cited viewpoints seem to suggest.

On a practical level, the limited translation between English and Arabic restricts access to the vast body of knowledge produced in the West, particularly in fields such as science, technology, and medicine. This lack of access can hinder educational and professional development in Arab countries, exacerbating as it does the economic and technological gap between East and West, which in turn will create a situation of "epistemicide," the systematic destruction or erasure of knowledge systems (Santos, *Epistemologies*, 2014, p. 7). This situation will also result in undermining cultural identity; nay, autonomy and the ability to contribute to the global intellectual and cultural landscape. Translation; hence, ceases to be a lever for peace and harmony between peoples; or at least a restricted conduit to that peace. The cross-cultural dialogue that it claims to reinforce turns out to be weak, not to say biased and potentially destructive, as I hope to have shown. This viewpoint, be it noted, squares with, among other,

Said Faiq's thesis that translation is not a neutral act but rather a form of intercultural negotiation that involves power dynamics, particularly in the context of East-West relations (Faiq, 2014, p.12).

In view of this situation, it is my contention that to create a more peaceful and just society is an endeavor that starts in the classroom, at school. For this so-called globalized world to be truly peaceful, a different approach needs to be adopted that integrates peace-building values into everyday learning. It is worth noting here --even at the risk of belaboring the point-- that I do believe that translation practice can help in fostering communication and understanding between cultures, but it does not suffice in building the blocks of a well-rounded and effective peace pedagogy, one that fosters empathy, tolerance, conflict resolution, and global citizenship. At heart, peace pedagogy addresses not only the cognitive aspects of education in general, but also taps into the emotional and social dimensions that inform any learning experience. In point of fact, by integrating a sound peace education into curricula across the East and West, a discourse of tolerance and acceptation of difference will see the light, and a generation of youngsters who are more open to cultural exchange will inhabit this world.

Also, translation, while vital for communication, does not engage individuals in the adoption of such a discourse nor does it help in any substantial way in reinforcing intercultural dialogue, for the latter involves much more than just spoken or written language; it in fact puts into the fold elements such as body language, tone, cultural symbols, as well as other non-verbal cues, all of which are to be read and interpreted to eventually lead to a better understanding of difference, of alterity. By the same token, peace education could help debunk the ideological hurdles that currently stall translation, as a I have tried to show, albeit in cursory fashion. Indeed, by encouraging learners to engage with diverse perspectives and to challenge preconceived notions about other cultures, peace education can promote a more inclusive and less antagonistic world-view. It can potentially create a climate wherein the threat of identity is annulled, an opportunity for intellectual enrichment.

In more practical terms, peace education seeks to fundamentally cultivate values such as peace, empathy, non-violence and conflict resolution tactics, the ultimate objective being to create a culture of peace and understanding in areas where these values are lacking. Particularly concerned with this type of education are conflict-ridden cultures that are afflicted with such social ills as prejudice,

intolerance, and cultural misunderstanding. And since peace education comprises various forms or facets such as Human Rights education, conflict resolution education, interfaith education, gender-fair education, to name but a few, the fact of the matter is that "each form of peace education practice also includes a particular knowledge base as a normative set of skills and value-orientations that it wants to develop" (Biesta, 2004, p. 12).

To this end, a more practice-oriented -- and holistic for that matter-- pedagogical approach is required for the appropriate values to be consolidated. Indeed, a mixture, not to say customized, set of approaches and methodologies need to be put in place that will secure the active engagement of the parties (or participants) involved. It is, as suggested earlier, a customized practice in that it takes into account the needs of each of these participants, for some of them will need to develop their critical thinking skills, others will need to develop a more collaborative mind-set, and so forth. It is high time; therefore, that we severed our connection to the age-old teaching model of treating participants as empty vessels to be filled with information, adopting as has been the usual practice, what Paulo Freire calls the "banking model of education" (Freire, 2003, p. 78). Instead, a paradigm shift in overall pedagogical strategy needs to be made that will create a learning climate where concepts such as collaboration, participation and communication are key. In practice, the strategies and practices to be adopted with a view to effectively building and consolidating the values of peace are numerous, and only a few will be laid out here.

As part and parcel of the curriculum, topics related to peace and global citizenship into various subjects, including history, social studies, and literature need to be incorporated. Lessons should highlight stories of peaceful change, cultural diversity, and respect for human rights. Other soft skills such as conflict resolution techniques (negotiation, mediation, and dialogue) are commonly seen as tools to advance students' thinking, transform their views and promote democratic behaviors. Particularly noteworthy here is Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, which rests on four major principles: (1) critical literacy, that is, to empower individuals to question the text, to identify bias and perspective, to consider context and so forth, (2) reading the Word and the World, which is the ability to understand, interpret and critique the world around us, (3) the use of analytic thinking and the discernment of power, to understand how power works in society, and (4) the ability to understand and transform relations of discursive power, that is, to recognize how power is embedded in language, discourse, and communication (Freire, 2003, p. 67). Also, role-playing activities can help

students practice resolving conflicts in a peaceful and constructive manner. The idea is that role-playing is a form of experiential learning through which students will acquire knowledge, skills, and values by directly engaging in first-hand experiences. Rather than passively receiving information, learners are led to actively participate in team tasks, collaborative projects, or 'real-world' situations, which will develop their team building spirit and, by the same gesture, will create what William Kreidler calls a 'peaceable classroom,' one that is "characterized by affirmation, cooperation, communication, appreciation for diversity, appropriate expression of feelings and peaceful conflict resolution" (Kreidler, 2002, p. 167).

Closely connected to experiential learning are those activities that engage learners in community service projects that promote social justice, equity, and peacebuilding. This practical involvement helps students see the real-world impact of peaceful actions and encourages them to contribute to positive change. More specifically, this type of learning is often inspired by what is known as a transformative pedagogy that seeks to "empower learners to critically examine their contexts, beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes with the goal of developing spaces for self-reflection, appreciation of diversity and critical thinking" (Education 2003, p. 4). A transformative pedagogy is realized when learning goes beyond the mind and connects hearts and actions.

Indeed, an affective dimension ought to be made room for in the space of peace education; otherwise, the whole practice will crumble. Learners have to be sensitized into the importance of dealing with others with a touch of empathy, which is basically to understand others beyond words. To this end, a peace pedagogy program ought to focus on practicing active listening; that is, on how to be fully engaged while another person is speaking. Thus will they learn the true meaning of mutual respect. Equally important in this regard is the fact that learners should be immersed in a series of mindfulness exercises that ultimately cultivate in them the readiness to care about themselves and about others. Also, through mindfulness, learners will become more aware of their emotions and, more importantly, of the fact that their interaction with others is always likely to leave an impact on them. Says Maya Angelou in another context, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" (Angelou, 1993, p. 102). Learners' emotional intelligence (E.Q.) needs; therefore, to be boosted through training that will enable them to manage their emotions, their anger and frustrations more effectively. In essence, peace pedagogy is susceptible of enriching intercultural and interfaith dialogue by cultivating a deeper, more holistic understanding of

the 'other,' unlike translation practice, which is subject to a great deal of pressures and constraints and propagates a western discursive formation that marginalizes the other, let alone strike peace with them.

It remains to be said here that a toolbox of other activities can be incorporated in peace pedagogy, which the space of this paper will not allow for listing. Suffice it to say that, at variance with translation practice, which generally remains within the prison-house of language, peace education addresses the emotional, social and ethical dimensions of communication. It is meant to transform, as it were, the learners' Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge (ASK) so that their intercultural dealings with others are made on the basis of active listening and mutual respect. It is my conviction that the consolidation of peace, though inherent in part, can be taught—"to reach peace, teach peace," to quote what has become a globally known phrase.

My paper has sought to debunk the prevailing view that translation is a conduit to intercultural exchange, a window into a vast arena of conflict and power struggle. It has offered peace education as a panacea for that crisis of communication between East and West. Methodologically, I am fully aware that the two concepts; namely, translation and peace pedagogy, operate differently, but are fundamentally similar in terms of overall orientation, for both aim at closing off the gap between cultures and people. The paper affirms that there is indeed a cultural divide between East and West, as suggested by R. Kipling, but it is a divide that, I maintain, can potentially be bridged by means other than translation as such. True, translation has historically played a consequential role in preserving communication between different cultures, but it remains marred by ideology and ethnocentric bias, as I have suggested earlier, which ultimately clogs any move towards addressing the deeper issues that trigger conflict and misunderstanding nowadays. At a fundamental level, investing in peace education will yield a great added value; it will secure commitment to shared human values as well as nurture, as it were, a new generation of global netizens that are better equipped to navigate cultural differences. Thereon, the East and West can meet and peace will be had.

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Exploring Cartoons in the Classroom: A Guided Reading Approach to Fostering Peace Education

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"Cartoons make us laugh; without them our lives would be much sadder. But they are no laughing matter: they have the power to inform, and to offend."

Kofi Annan

Abstract

The paper examines the potential of cartoons as powerful educational tools for fostering peace values in the classroom. It argues that cartoons are not merely illustrative or entertaining elements, but dynamic, dialogic visual texts that, when read critically, can foster deep reflection, empathy, and intercultural understanding. By framing cartoons within a structured guided reading approach, the paper moves beyond traditional uses of visual media and proposes a deliberate, critical practice aimed at fostering active interpretation and ethical engagement. Through this innovative reading practice, learners are not only taught to decode visual and symbolic meanings; They are also challenged to question assumptions, uncover multiple layers of meaning embedded in visual narratives, recognize cultural perspectives, and develop higher-order thinking skills. In doing so, the paper proposes a pedagogical pathway where visual literacy and peace education intersect, cultivating a more reflective, empathetic, and critically aware generation of learners.

Key words: cartoons; guided reading; dynamic; dialogic; classroom; peace education.

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In his opening address at the "Unlearning Intolerance" symposium in 2006, former United Nations Secretary -General Kofi Annan acknowledged the powerful impact of cartoons and highlighted their ambivalent capacity to both entertain and provoke. He noted that while cartoons often serve freedom by exposing injustice and abuse, they can also reinforce prejudices and foment tensions. This duality is critical when we consider the use of cartoons in education. It is tempting to celebrate their ability to challenge authority and provoke thought. Yet, it is equally important to remain aware of their potential to misrepresent, stereotype, or inflame. Kofi Annan's reflection on the dual power of cartoons presents an invitation for educators, scholars, and researchers to reflect on how this potent medium might be directed toward constructive ends. It is in this spirit that the present paper considers how the idea of transforming cartoons from sources of controversy into instruments of understanding may be realized within classroom contexts.

Drawing on classroom practice, it has been observed that cartoons, when carefully introduced, engage students more effectively than traditional teaching materials. Cartoons are considered valuable learning aids, particularly in conjunction with structured learning methods designed to achieve optimal learning outcomes. These humorous yet complex drawings, often loaded with meaning and addressing controversial topics within a single image, offer a unique and engaging medium for promoting peace values in educational settings. They are especially effective in classrooms that emphasize diversity, critical thinking, and ethical reflection.

The present study explores the role of cartoons as transformative tools in peace education, examining their ability to create inclusive learning environments, dismantle stereotypes, and promote empathy, tolerance, and critical thinking among learners. While sometimes sarcastic or incisive, the cartoons considered here also serve as avenues for reflection for students. By leveraging the potential of cartoons, educators can transform classrooms into spaces of meaningful dialogue and critical reflection, equipping students with the skills needed to disseminate healthy values and develop new modes of thinking that contribute to a more inclusive and peaceful world. This approach not only nurtures socially responsible individuals, but also equips learners with the attitudes and values necessary to negotiate the complexities of a globalized world with understanding and compassion.

Grounded in peace education theory and cultural representation, and building on previous research in media studies, the present paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach that integrates content analysis into pedagogical theory. Recognizing that cartoons have historically functioned as both instruments of critique and vehicles for social commentary, this study situates them within a broader theoretical framework that accounts for their educational potential and ethical implications. Functioning as both vehicles of critique and perpetuators of stereotype, cartoons hold significant constructive educational potential by encouraging learners to participate in meaningful discussions, thereby transforming the classroom into a space of inquiry and understanding. The present paper also offers strategies to mitigate challenges that educators may face when addressing cultural sensitivities, interpretation, and balancing humour with seriousness. By analysing selected case studies, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on the transformative use of visual media, specifically editorial and educational cartoons, in promoting humanistic and peace-centred pedagogies.

Accordingly, the paper is structured as follows: First, it offers a brief literature review that situates cartoons within broader frameworks of cultural representation, visual literacy, and critical pedagogy. It examines key theoretical perspectives and scholarly work, and draws on the insights of theorists such as Stuart Hall, whose theory of cultural representation highlights how meaning in media texts is not passively received but actively constructed through cultural codes and power relations. On a different note, Thomas Nail's kinetic theory of the image positions visual media as dynamic flows of meaning and mobile forms of thought capable of provoking emotional and ethical responses. Bridging these media theories with pedagogy, Paulo Freire's concept of education as the "practice of freedom" offers a foundation for critical engagement. His emphasis on critical consciousness underpins the paper's approach to guided reading, wherein learners are empowered to question visual narratives and respond critically to cultural representations.

Second, the paper outlines the methodology, focusing on the guided reading approach as a structured and dialogic strategy for engaging students with visual media. This approach enables learners to interpret cartoons with attention to both form and content, and to explore the values and assumptions they convey. The paper concludes by offering practical selected case studies that demonstrate

how cartoons can be integrated into educational settings so as to promote peace values and encourage ethical engagement with contemporary issues.

To fully comprehend the pedagogical value of cartoons, it is essential to understand their historical evolution. It is worth exploring how cartoons emerged, developed, and acquired their unique power to inform, provoke, and persuade across cultures and times. Rooted in satire and social critique, cartoons have evolved into multifaceted visual tools and are positioned today as instruments of intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding. The origins of the cartoon as a communicative form can be traced back to early caricatures and satirical drawings in ancient civilizations, where visual humour served to critique authority and social norms. However, it was in the late 18th century that the political cartoon emerged as a recognized genre, with artists such as James Gillray and George Cruikshank in Britain shaping public opinion with sharp wit and exaggerated imagery. Throughout the 19th century, cartoons became a staple of newspapers and periodicals, reaching wide audiences and influencing public opinion. In the early 20th century, the role of editorial cartoons expanded dramatically, especially during times of war and political upheaval, when they served both as propaganda tools and as vehicles of dissent (Press, 1981).

In recent years, cartoons have returned with renewed force, exerting significant influence on public opinion. The publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Poster, on 30 September 2005, and the ensuing controversy, sparked global debates on freedom of expression, cultural sensitivity, and the role of media in shaping public perceptions. In response to these tensions, a collective effort emerged to promote dialogue through visual satire, recognizing cartoons as a medium for fostering understanding rather than division and conflict. The founding meeting of twelve international cartoonists on 16 October 2006, convened by the French cartoonist Plantu and then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a symposium on "Unlearning Intolerance," materialized into what is known as Cartooning for Peace (Plantu & Cartooning for Peace, 2006).

It was in this context that the Cartooning for Peace initiative was launched. The initiative sought to shift the perception of cartoons from sources of provocation and division toward instruments of dialogue, tolerance, and peacebuilding. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and public debates, Cartooning

for Peace promotes freedom of expression and uses cartoons as tools for media literacy, ethical reflection, and intercultural dialogue. It provides a platform for artists from varied ideological backgrounds to connect, share perspectives, and collaborate on initiatives that champion human rights and combat prejudices. Mindful of potential misinterpretations in the digital age, where content spreads rapidly, the initiative emphasizes responsible and contextualized use of visual satire. Rapidly, the organization ensures that cartoons do not ignite conflicts but rather foster dialogue (Cartooning for Peace, 2023). In this context, cartoons must harness humour and satire in order to inspire essential debates and thoughtful reflections, offering critical perspectives on issues while maintaining a balance between critique and respect for different cultures and beliefs.

Building upon the historical trajectory of Cartooning for Peace, it becomes evident that cartoons are powerful tools for promoting dialogue and engagement with global issues. Beyond their role in political satire, the present study explores the pedagogical potential of cartoons in educational settings by highlighting their numerous benefits. Cartoons, as forms of art, have always been a fertile ground for storytelling. They offer a unique way of encapsulating cultural narratives. They open a window to cultures and offer viewers a glimpse into their values, traditions, and ethos. What makes these narratives significant is that, as this paper contends, they engage in a discourse that is more than just about cartoons; it is about understanding this form of expression as a powerful medium for cultural representation. Cartoons are not merely tools of humour or critique; they are complex cultural texts that construct and convey meaning through symbols, codes, and social references.

In this sense, Stuart Hall's theory of cultural representation provides a theoretical lens through which to understand cartoons. As Hall argues, representation is not a passive reflection of reality but an active process through which meaning is produced and negotiated within a culture. It is produced through the interplay between encoded messages and the viewer's cultural framework (Hall, 1997). This process leads to multiple, sometimes competing interpretations. On this basis, "meaning is never fixed, but always open to interpretation" (Hall, 1997, p. 228). Meaning is produced through a complex interaction between the creator of the image, who encodes particular viewpoints, ideologies, and assumptions, and the audience who, in turn, decode these

messages in varied ways depending on their cultural background, knowledge, and social context.

This approach is particularly relevant in peace education, where cartoons, as culturally situated texts, often carry layered ideological messages disguised in humour and satire. For example, a single cartoon can evoke laughter in one viewer, anger in another, and confusion in a third. What seems humorous or critical to one audience may be offensive or ambiguous to another. Therefore, fluid, negotiated, and potentially contested meanings help educators and learners approach visual texts not as transparent or universally understood, but as complex cultural artefacts that must be read critically and dialogically.

Just as Hall views media texts as sites of ideological negotiation, Paulo Freire insists in his theory that students must learn to "read the word and the world," recognizing the ways in which language, images, and narratives both reflect and shape structures of power (Freire, 1987, p. 35). This quote captures Freire's idea that education should create spaces where learners actively interrogate cultural representations and critically engage with the socio-political context around them. In this light, cartoons function as accessible yet layered texts that invite learners to question, reflect, and engage critically with representations of power, injustice, and identity. This opportunity allows them to develop not only a sense of critical analysis, but also to enhance their disposition for dialogue not only in the classroom but also outside of it, in the whole community (Freire, 1970). Freire encourages active enquiry and curiosity-led participation, empowering learners to become thoughtful interpreters and ethical participants in their communities. For Freire, learning is an endless process of becoming. It is not a finite act of receiving information, but a continuous journey of transformation, where learners constantly reshape their understanding of themselves and the world. It is a permanent process of questioning, reinterpretation, and re-creating meaning. In this context, cartoons serve as a dynamic educational tool that aligns perfectly with this endless becoming. Each encounter with a cartoon invites the learner to engage in dialogue: to question assumptions, dominant narratives, and perceive issues from new perspectives. Cartoons do not offer fixed answers; they stimulate a process of thinking that remains open, creative, and evolving.

In this regard, the cartoon becomes a mediating device that triggers new ways of seeing and challenges existing perceptions. Thus, using cartoons in the

classroom sustains the idea of learning as an ongoing process rather than a final product and challenges learners to resist passive acceptance and embrace ongoing 'critical consciousness', a concept which is central to Freire's philosophy. This approach transforms passive learners into active creators of knowledge through dialogue. They understand the power dynamics that shape their lives and are encouraged to think critically, grasp the hidden structures of domination, and participate in changing them.

Nail deepens this perspective by redefining images as kinetic entities in constant motion. They are dynamic processes that actively move and transform perceptions. He describes the image as "a living composition of matter" (Nail, 2019). This kinetic view positions cartoons not simply as visual artefacts, but as living images that circulate, provoke, and shift meaning. They travel across audiences, generate discussions, challenge stereotypes, and shape public understanding through their circulation. In this respect, cartoons are not passive reflections of the world. Instead, they spark debates, challenge dominant narratives, and invite critical reflection. Their emotive force aligns with educational practices which encourage critical and affective engagement with visual media in order to challenge ideologies, stereotypes, and foster dialogue. Through their dynamic nature, cartoons become more than just a commentary; they move, affect, and transform; they are agents of change.

It becomes evident that cartoons possess unique pedagogical values when viewed through this interdisciplinary lens. Each of these theoretical frameworks underscores the potential of cartoons not only to convey meaning, but also to make learning a more dynamic and inclusive experience. Cartoons, from various cultures, introduce students to different global perspectives, broadening their understanding and appreciation of diversity. Through their layered symbolism, cultural references, and emotional resonance, cartoons exemplify the kind of media that Hall sees as sites of negotiated meaning; they move and affect the way Nail describes, and they open up spaces for questioning and collective meaning-making in the spirit of Freire. It becomes clear that cartoons become dialogic texts that invite learners to ask deeper questions about justice, power, and the human condition. Their brevity, accessibility, and multimodal nature make them particularly effective for opening up classroom discussions on sensitive topics such as conflict, identity, and peace.

However, given the complexity of visual representation in cartoons and their role in shaping cultural perceptions, it is important to equip students with the appropriate methodology that can enhance their understanding. One effective method for achieving this is the guided reading approach. It is sufficient to state that this approach represents a key instructional strategy that helps students develop comprehension and appreciation skills.

Ford and Opitz emphasize that guided reading "invites students to become strategic readers by making sense of text through questioning, prediction, and interpretation" (Ford & Opitz, 2008, p. 42). It offers a structured yet flexible pedagogical framework that supports learners in actively engaging with texts at an appropriate level of difficulty. Originally developed to enhance literacy acquisition, this teaching method has since evolved to cover a range of textual forms, including visual texts such as cartoons. At its core, the method allows educators to scaffold students' comprehension while enhancing independence, interpretation, and critical thinking. Such an approach becomes even more impactful when applied in multicultural classrooms, where the diversity of students' backgrounds adds depth to the interpretive process. These multicultural classrooms provide a particularly rich and meaningful context for implementing the guided reading approach. Students from varied cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds offer distinct interpretive frameworks and lived experiences. Through critical questioning and reflective discussion, students learn to appreciate multiple perspectives and recognize the plurality of meanings that images may carry. In this way, the multicultural classroom becomes an asset rather than a challenge, because it not only builds up the interpretive richness of guided reading, but also becomes a living space for practicing the very values at the heart of peace education: respect, inclusion, and ethical engagement with others (McIntyre, Hulan, & Layne, 2011).

Within the context of peace education, this approach becomes especially valuable, as it enables learners to uncover bias and stereotype. This process is divided into three main activities: pre-reading (activating prior knowledge and setting a purpose), during-reading strategies (questioning, analysing), and post-reading reflection (discussion, synthesis, application). In practical terms, a guided reading session about a cartoon might begin with an exploration of surface details—characters, setting, expressions, or any accompanying text or caption. Learners are invited to observe without immediate interpretation. The teacher

then guides them toward deeper levels of meaning by asking questions such as: What issue is being addressed here? What emotions does the cartoon evoke? What symbols or metaphors are present? What might the cartoonist's message be, and who is the intended audience? This gradual movement from literal to inferential understanding mirrors what Vacca and Vacca refer to as the scaffolding of "text-to-world connections," whereby students relate textual elements to broader social, ethical, or historical contexts (Vacca & Vacca, 2008, p. 154).

For clarity and coherence, the established three-phase model of guided reading—pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading—is reframed as pre-viewing, during-viewing, and post-viewing. This adaptation enables educators to scaffold students' engagement with complex images and empowers them to become active readers. In the pre-viewing phase, students activate prior knowledge and anticipate meaning based on historical and cultural cues. The during-viewing phase involves close analysis of visual codes, symbols, caricature, and the interrogation of how meaning is encoded. In the post-viewing phase, learners reflect, articulate interpretations, and connect the image to broader issues such as justice or nonviolence, which are central to peace education. Although this task may seem daunting, full comprehension is not possible without these skill sets.

Having explained the procedure of guided reading constructively, let me now clarify how this approach can be effectively implemented in practice, particularly in the analysis of cartoons. When applied to cartoons, this strategy can help students find out how humour, irony, and symbolism function as tools for critical thinking. It can also open meaningful discussions about peace and cultural understanding.

Pre-viewing

Before introducing the cartoon, it is essential to activate students' prior knowledge, establish the context, and stimulate curiosity about the topic under discussion. The pre-viewing stage prepares learners to engage more meaningfully with the visual text by encouraging them to draw on their existing knowledge, experiences, and assumptions. At this stage, the teacher provides necessary background information on the cultural, historical, or political context of the cartoon in question. This may include prior knowledge of other images or texts, as well as personal experiences, which gradually inform students' engagement in

discussion and interpretation of the cartoon. From a semiotic perspective, cartoons operate simultaneously on denotative and connotative levels, communicating both literal meanings and culturally embedded associations (Barthes, 1977). Practically, the teacher may initiate a brainstorming session by asking students what they know about the cartoon's central issue such as migration, war, or artificial intelligence. Students can then be invited to predict the cartoon's message based on its title, a partially revealed image, a key symbol, or a removed caption. These prediction activities foster curiosity, encourage critical thinking, and prepare students for a deeper analysis during the viewing stage. The teacher can further guide the discussion by asking questions such as:

- What do you know about this issue?
- What do you expect the cartoon to represent based on the title or visual cues?
- Who might be represented in the cartoon?
- What message do you expect the cartoonist to convey?

During -viewing

At this stage, students closely examine the cartoon's visual and textual elements. They explore the culturally constructed associations that shape how the image is perceived. In other words, they uncover the cultural representation of the cartoon, which either reinforces or challenges dominant narratives. To facilitate this task, the teacher provides students with a structured worksheet and asks them to consider the following questions:

- Characters and expressions: Who is depicted? What emotions do they convey? Symbols and metaphors: What do the images represent?
- Textual elements: What does the caption add to the meaning?
- Colour and design choices: How do they influence the interpretation of the cartoon?
- Cultural representation: How does the cartoon represent a specific culture? Is it fair or biased?

The teacher can also encourage students to compare interpretations and discuss differing viewpoints. Multiple cartoons on the same issue, presented from different cultural contexts, can be provided to facilitate analysis of varying perspectives.

Post-viewing

The final stage in reading cartoons is post-viewing. The objective of this stage is to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the cartoon in conveying its message. Students should reflect on how different audiences might interpret the cartoon. Practically, the teacher can assign students distinct roles, such as cartoonist or affected group, and have them debate the cartoon's impact. Additionally, students may be asked to write a short paragraph reflecting on how the cartoon made them feel and what new insights they have gained. To guide this reflection, they may consider the following questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with the cartoon's message?
- If you were the cartoonist, how would you represent the issue differently?
- What perspectives or voices are absent from the cartoon?
- How effective is the cartoon in communicating its viewpoint?
- What lessons about peace, tolerance, or intercultural understanding can be drawn from this cartoon?

Ultimately, by adapting the guided reading approach to cartoons, students critically analyse the media they consume, question cultural narratives inherent in visual media, and, most importantly, develop the skills necessary to deconstruct media messages and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Having outlined and described the stages of guided reading, it is now important to illustrate their practical implementation in the classroom through a practical, in-depth analysis of selected cartoons. The following section demonstrates how visual narratives actively engage students with current issues, reinforcing or debunking stereotypes in tangible ways. Four cartoons have been selected for analysis. Each image serves as a case study that clarifies how visual texts encode layered meanings related to peace, conflict, and cultural representation. Through a critical reading of these cartoons, the paper models an educational practice that fosters deep reflection, intercultural dialogue, and ethical engagement among learners. The cartoons are described rather than reproduced due to copyright considerations. This approach allows readers to visualize the image through careful attention to characters, symbols, text, and composition. Each description is accompanied by an interpretive commentary that highlights themes related to the cartoon.

The first cartoon selected for analysis is by Jean Plantureux, known as Plantu, who is the co-founder of Cartooning for Peace. It highlights the theme of migration and emphasizes how cultural representation and humour can be intertwined in visual narratives. The large, well-equipped ship, which represents France or Europe in general, bears the inscription on its side: "Asile politique seulement" = "Political asylum only". The official on the ship is rendered with exaggerated facial features, making him appear out of touch. Adopting a dismissive posture, he addresses the starving migrants with the words: "Ceux qui meurent de faim, levez la main!" = "Those who are dying of hunger, raise your hand!". The migrants are depicted in a simplified, almost faceless manner. They are portrayed as visibly weak and starving, and unable to respond. This representation emphasizes their suffering and the stark inequality between the refugees and the authorities who determine their fate.

Thus, the cartoon offers a powerful critique of migration policy. It disapproves of the bureaucratic and unrealistic approach to asylum that excludes economic refugees, even when their suffering is as severe as that of political refugees. Through the strategic use of contrast, irony, and symbolic imagery, the cartoon offers a visual critique of the discrepancy between European asylum policies and the humanitarian realities faced by migrants.

A single image can articulate the absurdity of policies that fail to recognize suffering unless it fits narrow legal definitions. To illustrate, the first cartoon employs a stark chromatic contrast: the large European ship, rendered in highly saturated blue, white, and red, the colours of the French flag, symbolizes order and power, whereas the fragile wooden migrant boat, depicted in dull brown, evokes hardship and despair. The cartoon further utilizes exaggeration and caricature to accentuate absurdity; the official is portrayed with an oversized nose and depicted in a casual, indifferent posture, while the migrants are rendered as fatigued, lifeless, and incapable of raising their hands, thereby emphasizing vulnerability. Additionally, the sea and boat function symbolically: they represent the perilous nature of the migrants' journeys and the divide between "us" and "them." The migrants' raised hands signify helplessness and a plea for recognition of basic human needs. The deliberate minimalism in visual detail ironically contrasts with the gravity of the situation, thereby compelling the viewer to confront the lack of empathy toward migrants who may not qualify for political asylum under strict legal criteria, nonetheless require urgent humanitarian assistance.

Extending the analysis, the second cartoon examines how visual symbolism and satire can provoke critical thought regarding international inaction in the face of aggression, potentially alluding to Russia's actions in Ukraine, as suggested by the missile bearing the Russian flag. First, the cartoon utilizes symbolism: the globe personified as a suited figure represents the international community, endowed with human traits such as crying and shushing. The crying globe evokes empathy, yet its apparent inaction critiques the disparity between expressed concern and substantive intervention. The shushing gesture symbolizes the suppression of truth or the silencing of dissent by dominant global powers. Second, the cartoon employs exaggeration and caricature, evident in the globe's enlarged, expressive features, which amplify emotionality and reinforce the notion of performative grief. In contrast, the small, vulnerable figure amidst rubble exaggerates the helplessness of war victims. The use of contrasting colours: blue and grey further prompts viewers to interrogate whether the international community genuinely cares for war victims or merely enacts concern.

Shifting focus, the third cartoon draws attention to the application of artificial intelligence across domains such as medicine, education, legal systems, and geopolitics. It humorously demonstrates artificial intelligence's inability to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The speech bubble states: "Nous lui avons demandé de trouver une solution au conflit Israélo-Palestinien"= "We asked it to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." This ironically implies that artificial intelligence is inadequate when confronted with complex, historically and ideologically entrenched human conflicts. The cartoonist therefore emphasizes the necessity of ethics, diplomacy, and wisdom in addressing political dilemmas. Through a Freirean lens, the cartoon encourages viewers to engage in dialogue regarding who controls artificial intelligence, whose interests it serves, and what values are embedded in its programming, thereby fostering critical reflection on technology, ethics, and social justice.

Finally, the fourth cartoon offers a culminating example of how visual media can challenge perceptions, expectations, or attitudes concerning freedom of speech. It explicitly highlights the problematic nature of "framing" freedom of expression, suggesting that any attempt to delimit it is inherently ineffective. The cartoonist employs irony by placing the frame upon a chaotic, uncontainable splash of colour, symbolizing freedom of expression, thereby suggesting the absurdity of

attempting to constrain something that inherently transcends boundaries. The phrase "Ce n'est pas évident d'encadrer la liberté d'expression" = "It is not evident to frame freedom of speech" functions as humorous understatement that critiques censorship or excessive control of speech.

Synthesizing these analyses, the four cartoons collectively demonstrate the rich potential of visual media to foster critical engagement and ethical reflection within the classroom. By guiding students through a structured reading of images: observing symbolism, interrogating cultural codes, and questioning underlying assumptions, educators can transform cartoons from simple illustrations into dynamic tools for peacebuilding. However, the effective use of cartoons in peace education demands more than enthusiasm for visual media. This complexity requires that teachers possess not only scaffolding techniques grounded in visual literacy theory, but also a nuanced understanding of global and local socio-political and cultural contexts to effectively guide discussions. With this in mind, teachers should carefully select cartoons that are culturally appropriate, avoiding content that is controversial, sensitive, or potentially offensive if not framed correctly.

In addition to these contextual considerations, educators may encounter practical constraints. Some may feel that time spent on visual media detracts from core academic content. Time constraints within curricula, coupled with the lack of pedagogical resources or formal training in visual analysis, further complicate the task. Moreover, fostering a safe and inclusive environment where students can critically explore diverse and often divergent perspectives requires thoughtful facilitation and professional institutional support. It is argued that by addressing these challenges, educators can develop more responsible approaches to incorporating cartoons into teaching practices. To maximize the pedagogical value of cartoons, it is essential not only to use them, but to equip students with the analytical tools necessary to access their multiple facets.

Turning to the broader implications of this study, as Maria Montessori profoundly states, "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war" (Montessori, 1949, p. 24). This insight encapsulates the essential spirit of the present study. In an era marked by global unrest and the proliferation of media, the classroom emerges as a vital space where peace-oriented values and intercultural understanding can be cultivated. The paper has explored the educational potential of cartoons as culturally rich, layered

texts. By employing a guided reading approach, educators can help learners move beyond surface-level interpretations and engage in deeper processes of questioning, decoding, and ethical inquiry. Hence, students are empowered not only to decode complex messages and question stereotypes, but also to appreciate diverse perspectives and build critical thinking skills , a crucial capacity in today's media-saturated world. Moreover, students are not merely passive consumers of data; they also create content that reflects their views, thereby contributing to an open, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment. The paper has demonstrated through theoretical frameworks and concrete examples that visual literacy can be harnessed to promote empathy, dialogue, and critical thinking. Cartoons, when accompanied by guided analysis, move beyond representation to become catalysts for change. Based on this, students do not merely view the image but feel and act upon it. They question their assumptions about different issues such as discrimination, injustice, war, or artificial intelligence, and consider the real-world consequences of bias.

However, the integration of cartoons in the classroom is not without challenges. Cultural sensitivity, content appropriateness, and curriculum constraints are but a few factors that demonstrate the intricacies of this educational tool. Yet, with adequate training and institutional support, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities for pedagogical innovation. Students develop their own narratives, experience diverse perspectives, and articulate their ideas in creative ways. All in all, they become more informed, thoughtful, and empathetic citizens in an increasingly interconnected world.

Looking ahead, future research could provide valuable insights into how students from different cultural backgrounds perceive and respond to issues such as peace, conflict, and justice. Such studies could also investigate the influence of cartoons on students' attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making. In particular, research could examine whether students who engage with cartoon-based peace education become more empathetic and socially responsible adults. Finally, research could explore how cartoons can be integrated into broader educational curricula, extending beyond peace education to subjects such as history, arts, and political studies. By opening these new pathways for research, educators and scholars could highlight the versatility of cartoons as a teaching tool across diverse contexts. The insights shared here aim to inspire wider adoption of visual media as transformative educational resources that speak across languages and cultures.

Therefore, the paper hopes to acknowledge the role of education not as a neutral act, but as a powerful and necessary practice of peacebuilding.

In the long run, one innovative direction that merits further exploration is the creation of "peace labs" within the classroom. Unlike a traditional lecture-based setting, a peace lab is a flexible, inclusive, and participatory space where learners engage critically and creatively with cultural differences and ethical dilemmas using diverse expressive tools. These may include digital storytelling, interactive comics and cartoons, podcasting, visual art, theatre improvisation, and social media campaigns. This concept opens rich avenues for academic inquiry and civic engagement. It also invites educators to rethink the boundaries between curriculum, creativity, and social transformation.

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Humanist-centered Pacifist World Literature and its Role in shoring up Peace

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We, this people, on this minuscule and kithless globe
Who reach daily for the bomb, the blade, and the dagger
Yet who petition in the dark for tokens of peace …
Out of our mouths come 'cankerous words'
Yet out of those same mouth
Come songs of such exquisite sweetness
That the heart falters in its labor
And the body is quieted into
Maya Angelou

Peace Studies, a relatively new interdisciplinary field combining politics, history, religion, anthropology, religion, sociology, and literary studies, among others purports to find avenues conducive to peace. Underlying Peace Studies are humanism, theism, *Sufism,* geopolitical diplomacy, and pacifism. Interestingly, peace, along with a rejection of all forms of violence and intolerance, is a recurrent theme in literature. And yet, little attention, if at all, is paid to the role that world literature can play in raising the awareness of people about pacifism—the belief that war is always undesirable, unjustifiable, and avoidable—and that lasting peace is possible provided there is some good will. This said, the need to re-discover the role played by literature in fostering pacifism has never been as urgent as it is today. Where in many parts of the world, people enjoy the blessings of relative peace, the Arab-Islamic world is in the grip of seemingly endless conflicts, which are attributable to a set of historical, political, social, ideological, and economic factors. Underlying such conflicts are benighted ideological currents which threaten to hurl that world into an abyss (a grim prospect aptly articulated by Boualem Sansal's *2084*, for example).[1] Particularly disquieting is the prospect of totalitarian States which

1- Boualem Sansal, *2084,* (Paris: *Seuil* Editions, 2015)

negate all humanist values (that are essential to peaceful existence), privilege blind acceptance of rigid dogma, deliberately undermines culture, and fosters ethnocentric and religious supremacy. It is my contention that culture, in general, and literature, in particular, constitute a potent antidote against such tendencies. Against a culture that posits "sacred ignorance" and the closing of the mind, a culture that promotes diversity, celebrates difference, and fosters mutual toleration needs to be promoted by all means possible. To be sure, writing or reading literary books will not stop shells or dissuade extremists from their evil deeds, but these acts –through the lofty humanist values that they convey—can certainly provide the soil on which hope for a better world may take root.

Culture in general and World Literature, in particular, constitute an inexhaustible reservoir of universal humanist values which can offer immunity against fascist, chauvinist, ethno-centrist, and totalitarian ideas which fuel violence and lead to war. It is my argument that the incorporation of a course in world literature centered on encounters between various peoples and cultures as captured by literary works would constitute a step in the right direction. And for practical purposes, the course would propose titles of novels, short stories, poems, and essays which question and reject supremacist, racist, misogynist, chauvinist ideas and bring to the fore lofty humanist values and human rights as viable alternatives. The paper will also propose a useful methodology for dealing with these texts and enable non-literary students to enjoy literature and benefit from its lessons. More specifically, what is proposed here is a set of **guided readings** in **world literature** which foster the student's **cultural awareness**, sharpen his/her **critical thinking**, and encourage him/her to address specific issues and reach conclusions of their own. We are all aware of the crucial role played by education in awareness-raising and the training of minds. And this is particularly true here in this Institute, which is entrusted with the training of scholars –tomorrow's religious guides and leaders—who certainly command a great deal of respect and exert considerable influence on their communities. Opening up to world cultures, through literature, can only be beneficial to the institute's students who already receive a good training is *Shari`ah* related disciplines, comparative religions, languages, and the social sciences.

What has spurred me to opt for this particular topic—Universalist Humanist Values to counter all sorts of extremism and to shore up global peace—are two considerations: (1) the massive and systematic destruction of Islamic and non-Islamic cultural landmarks which celebrate spiritualism and (2) an old and still relevant book, titled *Culture and Anarchy* by Matthew Arnold,[2] which argues

2- Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy,* (1869) edited by Rober H. Super (Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan Press, 1977). In *Culture and Anarchy*, Matthew Arnold sought a center of authority by which the anarchy caused by the troubled passage of the Reform

that culture is the best antidote against anarchy and angst. Let me now cite but a few instances illustrating the anarchy that is threatening universal culture and humanity itself.

The 2001 Taliban destruction of the *Buddha* statues massive archaeological monuments dating back to the 6th century has become emblematic of the cultural and religious intolerance of radical fanatics who destroy cultural landmarks in the name of Islam. Fanatical elements have done equal damage to Islam's own religious heritage. Not only have *Shia* and *Sunni* partisans bombed each other's mosques in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan, but *Sufi* places of worship are under attack throughout the Islamic world.

A few years, Islamic militants in Mali demolished historical mausoleums, universities and libraries in the ancient Saharan trading town of *Timbuktu* and Sufi worship halls have also been turned to rubble in Iran, where the Islamic government has reportedly jailed and tortured thousands of *Sufi* practitioners for their unorthodox views. And in Egypt since the fall of Mubarak Sufi shrines have been torched and the *Sufi* chanting ritual called *Dhikr* (or, remembrance of God) has been banned in some locations. In Syria, radicals destroyed *Palmyre* in a bid to bring its heritage to nothing. Recently, an extreme right activist, brainwashed by the poison of Islamophobia, which is fueled by the media, armed to the teeth, entered a mosque in New Zealand and shoots at Muslim worshippers, killing more than fifty in cold blood and injuring another fifty people.

Bill of 1867 might be regulated. Disturbed by the social and political confusion which prevailed in Britain in the second half of the 19th Century and by the inability of either the church or the government to cope with the growing unrest both in England and on the Continent, Arnold attempted to describe an objective center of authority that all, regardless of religious or social bias, could follow. This center of authority is culture, which he defined on the level of the individual as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world." Because this authority is internal, it is a study of perfection within the individual, a study that should elevate the "best self" through a fresh and free search for beauty and intelligence. By following "right reason," Arnold foresaw a way to overcome the social and political confusion of the 1860's and to prepare for a future in which all could be happy and free. With this basically romantic view of human beings as a means and human perfectibility as the end, Arnold turned to social criticism, carefully showing that no other center of authority was tenable. Religion (Christianity, in the case of Arnold is like culture in that it also seeks to learn the will of God (human perfection) and make it prevail. Culture goes beyond religion, however, is a harmonious expansion of all human powers. Only culture, the harmonious union of poetry (the ideal of beauty) and religion (the ideal of morality), sees itself as a means that preserves the totality of the individual. Culture looks beyond machinery; it has only one passion—the passion for "sweetness" (beauty) and "light" (intelligence) and the passion to make them prevail. With such a passion it seeks to do away with social classes and religious bias to make the best that has been thought and known in the world (right reason) the core of human endeavor and institutions.

We could go on and on citing the havoc wreaked by narrow-minded radicals who use Islam as a guise and a pretext to commit atrocious crimes against humanity and its cultural heritage, or target Islam and Muslims, on the basis of well-entrenched stereotypes and unexamined ideas, or altogether on the grounds of vested economic interest as colonial powers have and still are doing in many parts of the world, but in the Middle East, in particular. But what I would like to stress one thing here: these radical bigots are the avowed enemies of culture and the sworn enemies of humanities. They are nihilists. And here is precisely where Matthew Arnold becomes relevant. In times of crisis, angst, and anxiety, humanity has three major assets to hold on to: greater spiritualism (and less fixation on formalism and ceremony); greater hope in humanity's resilience; and faith in authentic humanitarian values. In short, Arnold believed (and I do share his views) that culture in general, and literature, in particular, can "delight and enlighten." They can also serve as antidote to ignorance, benightedness, and bigotry and as purveyor of such alternatives as mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and profitable cooperation.

In March 2011, UNESCO held a meeting on "Peace and Dialogue among Cultures at the UN Headquarters in New York."[3] Experts agreed that "re-thinking peace and reconciliation resonated with the quest for a new Humanism for the 21st Century." They added that "this concept of humanism has to concentrate on cultural diversity dialogue in the age of the internet, and reconciliation between the North and the South." The new humanism has to be authentically pluralist cosmopolitanism, inspiring reflection and expressing aspirations from everyone and everywhere. The new humanism, while keeping some eternal values and principles, has necessarily made some breaks with old humanism. More explicitly, the new revamped humanism no longer has the same meaning as it had during the renaissance in Europe, when it was established on the image of the ideal man, master of himself and the universe. It also goes beyond the reductive meaning that the Enlightenment philosophers gave it, and which have remained, despite their *universalist* aspirations, restricted to a Eurocentric vision of the world.[4]

The new humanism is all-inclusive: it respects cultural diversity, rejects the idea that any single culture should claim universal monopoly, enhances shared human values, values human dignity and human rights, and fosters the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. Inasmuch as the new humanism draws upon universal cultures, world literature as a form of expression constitutes an inexhaustible reservoir of noble human values which should be re-visited,

3- For more information on this important event see reports on the *High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures,* (Paris: UNESCO's publications, 2010 and 2011).

4- See, for instance, Edward Said, *Humanism* and *Democratic Criticism,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

adopted, and instilled in young people across the world. These high values constitute the main buffer against the dangers of anarchy and extremism.

Needless to say, new humanist values can be conveyed to the young in many different ways. But at the level of academy, and more specifically, at the level of this institute which shoulders an enormous responsibility –that of training qualified, open-minded, and multi-skilled scholars in religious sciences—these values could be considered in the context of a course in world literature. Given that the organizers of the present conference have asked the participants to make some concrete proposals concerning the ways and means of enhancing cultural awareness, fostering cross-cultural communication, and shoring up a culture of peace, I propose the incorporation of a world literature course centered on humanist values. As to the teaching method, one of the most interesting approaches have been proposed by researchers is guided-reading.[5]

Allow me now to make a few remarks about this method. Needless to say, the theories that underpin guided reading are complex and varied, and a full discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that guided reading is an important approach used in an educational context. It is a strategy that supports students with similar reading abilities or students who need to acquire similar skills to be successful readers. Students are organized in small groups, at similar levels of reading development and encouraged to use similar processes and strategies. The aim is to encourage interaction among the students and to allow the facilitator to observe individual reading behaviour. Since guided reading is an approach that is concerned with the development of comprehension and appreciation skills, facilitators use comprehension strategies to enhance, understand and foster interpretive abilities. More explicitly, these strategies should include the following: (1) activating background knowledge; (2) fostering prediction; (3) self-questioning; (4) making inferences; (5) highlighting important information; (6) summarizing; (7) textual analysis and commenting; (8) monitoring and learning to repair faulty comprehension and mend possible misinterpretation.

This might seem to be daunting, but each of the above is an important strategy. Inasmuch as the aim is to develop reading and analytical skills and to foster linguistic and literary competencies, students are more likely to make these comprehension strategies their own when they have frequent and systematic opportunities to read and discuss a text with a facilitator and their peers. During the guided reading process, students read in their "zones of proximal development" (ZPD) and the facilitator scaffolds each student's construction of meaning and provides appropriate amount of gradually flexible support on

5- See *Effective Guided Reading: Theory and Practice,* (London: Pearson, 2015).

the learning requirement of each student. The facilitator reflects in action and is able to make the vital on-going adjustments and continually modify instructions based in students' immediate learning needs. Through ongoing observation and assessment, the facilitator selects appropriate texts and informs their interactions and significance with individuals in the group. Using a level and varied collection of texts is a key concept of guided reading in that texts are organized in an ascending order of complexity to help students develop learning strategies.

Because facilitators work closely with relatively small groups for guided reading, they are able to carefully monitor each student's processing of texts and to adjust further teaching and text-selection in the light of their background knowledge and prior experience. Predictably, the latter play a crucial role in the reading process; they represent the knowledge structures in readers' minds, which allow readers to connect new information with what they already know. These may be personal experiences, knowledge of the world, or prior knowledge of other texts in other languages. This is felicitous, particularly in multi-lingual cultures like our Moroccan culture, where Moroccans are generally conversant with at least two languages.

It is therefore important that facilitators bring background knowledge, skills, and experiences to the fore to enable the students to make sense of what they are reading and to make links with prior knowledge. Accordingly, students gradually engage in discussion of the contents of the texts, the reading strategies they use, their understanding of the texts, and the most plausible interpretations that can be given to them.

In a nutshell, guided reading enables facilitators both to develop their awareness of background knowledge and to cater effectively to diversity which is usually revealed through interaction. This explains why at the conclusion of text-reading, the facilitator conducts a discussion with students. This after-reading segment can provide students with opportunities to reflect on what they have learned from the text, extend what they have learned, make connection with their own experiences, and enhance their understanding of the world and appreciation of cultural diversity. The students also hone their strategic critical reading abilities providing the facilitator with feedback about their reading experience. As Cooper (1997) noted: "good guided reading is very interactive, with students and teacher each participating in the process."

Having explained the procedure of reading texts profitably, let me now make some concrete proposals regarding the literary pieces which might be incorporated in a world-lit course aimed at raising students' awareness about the importance of shared humanist values, the merits of cultural diversity, and the necessity of tolerance, mutual recognition and respect in today's world, and peaceful co-existence. I am convinced that the more world literature our students

read, the more sensible they become, as they come to realize that there are far more things which unite the members of the large human community than those that divide them. It must be stressed here that this list is suggested by way of illustration solely, as world literature is virtually an inexhaustible source of human values and literature is a mere vector of humanist values which our world so badly needs to contain or, at least counter the murderous folly which has gripped it.

- Archetypal literary texts such as Homer's *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey* are worth considering for what they may teach people about cross-cultural encounters and dialogues: while the former text depicts war as an inevitable outcome of the breakdown of *communication*, the latter text celebrates the quest for knowledge where language plays a fundamental role. It is significant that when the enchantress, Calypso, in an attempt to keep Odysseus on her island, offers him the precious gift of immortality; he declines it, preferring a riskier, shorter life to an eternal life of bliss and stasis. In other words, Odysseus prefers to brave the risks to travel the Mediterranean world and meet other peoples, increasing knowledge about them and, in the process, about his own self, to a life of sensual pleasures and utter intellectual passivity. This could be instructive to our youth. Many are drawn to sinister projects to achieve some kind of utopia on earth, through destruction of the self and others. The problem is that such utopian *Caliphate* can never be achieved, and even if it were, it would be marred by intrigue and tragedies or, at worst, an utterly fascist system. And history teems with utopian projects that have turned into disastrous systems based on oppression, intrigue, nepotism, and fear.

- Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince,* notably the section titled the art of peace. Erasmus's writings came in the context of a dialogue over the relative attractions of peace and war to European ruler. Though Erasmus' book did not enjoy the popularity earned by Machiavelli's *the Prince* and despite the charge of idealism brought against him, Erasmus made several suggestions which resonate to this day. One such is that, as he argued, the cost of war is almost higher than its benefits to people (regardless of the short-term gains). Another suggestion made by Erasmus, disputes can always be settled by means of peaceful arbitration and dialogue. In this he echoes the famous Shakespearian statement, "blood in no negotiation." Erasmus could not have been righter. Just an example for the audience to contemplate: imagine if Syria had opted for peaceful negotiations with all national stakeholders? It could have saved 500,000 lives that have been lost in the mayhem, used the US $400 billion now needed for reconstruction, to change the face of Syria considerably, turning it into another Singapore, and kept its 9 million displaced Syrians home.

- The current mayhem created by *Daech* and many other groups are based on some imagined supremacy and hatred of all those who are different. Oftentimes, difference is perceived as dangerous. Sartre's statement: "l'enfer c'est les autres" still resonates today. And the only antidotes to such gratuitous hatred which is provoked by ignorance, mainly, are love and erudition. We have suggested that knowledge, acquired through travels or extensive readings about other people and culture can only bring appreciation of other people and better knowledge of the self, too. Loving-kindness is also a good antidote. And in our Islamic civilization, this humanist loving kindness is to be found in the *Sufi* heritage. Here, readings might include the works penned by Shah and some poems by Jalaluddine Ar-Rumy. Muslim students and Westerners, alike, need to become aware once more of this "other face" of Islam. Those who would espouse a black-and white view of the world might do well to read some of the jokes centered on the *Mulla* Nasrudin,[6] the wise fool of the *Sufis*, translated and retold by Shah. When a king insisted that his subjects tell the truth on pain of death, the Mulla was at the front of the queue the following morning to get inside the city gates. There, the captain of the guard, standing in front of a gallows, asked him a question, to which he had to give the true answer – or be hanged.

"Where are you going?" he asked Nasrudin.

"I am going," said the Mulla, "to be hanged on those gallows."

"I don't believe you."

"Very well, then. If I have told a lie, hang me!"

"But that would make it the truth," spluttered the captain

"That's right," said Nasrudin. "Your truth."

The implications are clear: there is no absolute truth and no one may be said to hold it. Accepting one's truth and tolerating other possible truth is the pathway to understanding and tolerance, which, in turn constitutes the bridge conducive to mutual appreciation and loving-kindness.

- Along the same lines, *Sufism* historically was one of the great wellsprings of Islamic philosophy, and deeply influenced luminaries like the great Muslim theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and the thirteenth century mystic thinker, Ibn Arabi. Some have credited *Sufism's* open-minded approach to knowledge with the development of Islamic medicine and other sciences in the Middle Ages. *Sufism's* influence on the literature, music, art and architecture of Islam is also immense, and it was a potent force in many

6- Idriss Shah, *The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasruddine,* (London: Penguin, 1979)

of the political and social reform movements in the 19th century. "In the Islamic world," according to Seyyed Houssein Nassr,[7] professor of Islamic studies "*Sufism* is the most powerful antidote to the religious radicalism called fundamentalism as well as the most important source for responding to the challenges posed by modernism." The *Sufism* that we know, while deeply Islamic in form, is universal in spirit. I think often of what our Sheikh, *Muzzafer* Effendi, told his Turkish followers when they asked him why he didn't convert more foreign dervishes to Islam. "There are more than enough Muslims already," he replied. "What the world needs is more lovers of God!" I would love to say this to the extremists who are bombing holy places and attacking *Sufi* practitioners.

- To sensitize students to the dangers of religious bigotry, extremism, ill-faith, a reading of "Young Goodman Brown," by Hawthorne [8] or *The Crucible* [9] by Arthur Miller may prove to be more rewarding and instructive than actual lectures. More explicitly, the tale's exploration of man's dual nature; the perils of Manichean *world-views*; the consequences of bad-faith, mistrust, and isolation; the dangers of unbridled individualism and rigid collectivism; and the risks attendant upon self-righteousness and intolerance make of Hawthorne's superbly intricate story an extraordinary cautionary tale with implications for Americans and Arab-Muslims.

- To dismantle the idea of "superiority" "inferiority" when reference is made to civilization, Claude Lévi-Strauss's travel memoirs in *Tristes Tropiques* may be considered. Based on actual interactions with the so-called primitives of Brazil, the author notes that these primitive cultures have a great deal to teach so-called advanced civilizations. One may also cover H.G Wells, *"The Country of the Blind."* Briefly, the anti-hero in this short story discovers a country inhabited by blind people and decides to conquer them on the strength of his sight. But he fails altogether because the community has turned its blindness into a force. Nunez the anti-hero ends up an outcast where formerly he was hoping to be a leader. The story undercuts the myth of civilizational supremacy and questions the self-deluded assumptions of supremacists.

- To enhance the student's capacity to perceive the falsity and dangers underpinning certain utopian projects, an incorporation of George

7- Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity,* (San Francisco: Harper, 2002) and *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World* (1993).

8- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *"Young Goodman Brown,"* in the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* (New York, Norton Publishing, 1985)

9- Arthur Miller, *The Crucible,* (Harmondworth: the Viking Press, 1971)

Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984,* and/or Boualem Sansal's *2084* can only be highly instructive. The three dystopian novels expose the manipulations and excesses of totalitarianism. In 2084, we are in *Abistan*, an immense empire that derives its appellation from Abi the delegate of Yolah on earth. The system of governance is founded on amnesia of all things human and absolute submission to a Deity. The population enjoys the bliss of faith which is not perturbed by any questions. Ati sets questions against the absolute truths prevalent in *Abistan*. He thus sets out on a journey to find a community of dissidents who question the foundational beliefs of *Abistan*.

- To acquaint the reader with humanist values at their best, the poetry composed by Leopold Sedar Senghor constitutes a fine and eloquent expression. I have in mind the poem *To New York,*[10] in particular. The poem is beautiful in form and contents. Its theme revolves around New York as an epitome of White Civilization. Rather than condemn this civilization about the untold injustices inflicted on blacks and disempowered people, in general, Senghor sends a message of peace, advocating a humanist future that learns from the past to build a future based on mercy, toleration, and mutual complementariness among the members of the human civilization Another beautiful poem which pleads for a global humanist identity is titled "The Heretic," by Khalil Jabran which denounces all forms of despotism, fascism, cultural supremacy. Talking about African literature, there is a large corpus of oral and written literature with messages of peaceful co-existence. In South Africa, for example, the concept of *Ubuntu/botho* has gained recognition as a form of African humanism. It has been defined by philosopher Mbiti thus: "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am." It is an affirmation of subjectivity that puts communitarian good before individual good, but without undermining individual self-worth in any way.

- Along the same line, the African tradition, has been extended and developed on the other side of the Atlantic amidst the African American community. The tradition, traced back to slave narratives and culminating in the current works of Maya Angelou and many others is replete with messages of reconciliation and peace. We need only mention people like Du Bois, Martin Luther King, to be reminded of the pacifist layers within Black studies, in the past and the present.

- To shore up awareness of the universality of human values, it is important to draw on old Asian civilizations' contributions to universalist humanism.

10- Leopold Sedar Senghor, *To New York* in Janet Vaillant, *Black, French, and African: A Life of Leopold Sedar Senghor,* (Harvard University Press, 1990).

The substance of new humanism can only be enriched with the ingredients of Chinese culture: the Confucians pay tribute to benevolence, the Mohists to universal love, the Taoists to compassion, the Buddhists to loving-kindness. Love and peaceful co-existence seem to be omnipresent topic to all schools of thought in China.

- To show the dangers of racism or confession-based discrimination, there is a plethora of texts to consider. A good one might be Tahar Benjelloun's *Le Racisme Expliqué à ma fille* (which is now available in an Arab/French edition and an English version is also available),[11]

- To show the merits of multi-culturalism, peaceful co-existence, and cross-fertilization, one might assign such texts as *Seasons of Migration to the North* by Sudanese novelist Tayyib Salih, *Yaacubian Building* by Egyptian Mohammed Al-Aswany, the *Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi.

- A very recent book, titled *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor,* by Yossi Klein Halevi deserves attention. It is a plea for and celebration of diversity and peaceful co-existence, in full respect of ethnic, cultural, and national differences.

We could go on and on citing pertinent literary works, but the point made should be quite clear by now. Literature, as a recent study conducted in Canada has revealed, refines human values, spreads humanistic values, and fosters sensibility—and thus mutual human understanding. Besides, it is a superb way for students to practice their English and improve in a pleasurable way. Above all, it provides exemplars of the best that humanity has produced –its humanism, which is, alas, being drowned by extremism, racism, phobias, and introversion. But all-inclusive humanism in its newest version, as this paper has contended, could be revived and bolstered, through literature and reading, and made to serve the ideal of peace and peaceful co-existence in today's troubled world.

11- Tahar Benjelloun, *Le racisme expliqué a ma fille,* (Paris: Seuil, 1998)

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The Challenges of Integrating Peace Education in Higher Education EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate how peace education is integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at the university level along with the hardships that accompany it. It specifically tries to identify how the incorporation of peace education is perceived among university EFL teachers, how they effectively incorporate peace education into their teaching practices, and what obstacles hinder this process. The study makes use of methodological triangulation where both quantitative and qualitative research instruments are used for data collection. This study is based on fieldwork research relying on interviews as well as online questionnaires. Results suggest that there is strong enthusiasm for integrating peace education among university EFL teachers; however, this integration faces significant challenges including large class sizes, language barriers, lack of time within the curriculum, insufficient training and resources inter alia.

Keywords: *Peace Education; EFL Classrooms; Higher Education; Professional Development.*

* * * * *

Introduction

Peace has always been a prominent notion of life in human society. Having such a significant role in human existence, peace has recently become the cynosure of all eyes in nearly all aspects of life, including language teaching and learning. Also, within the context of globalization which has brought together different parts of the world with their specific characteristics, morals, cultures and identities in different ways, peace education has recently received increasing attention as a tool that fosters the peaceful interaction and coexistence of sundry cultures. Indeed, the process of teaching far exceeds the task of conveying theoretical knowledge to students to integrating real life contexts into the process of learning. The promotion of humanistic values is meant to develop students'

interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which have gained significant momentum in recent decades, particularly in higher education. According to UNESCO (1995), "learning of languages is one of the most fruitful avenues for education for tolerance and mutual understanding.". In the same vein, Gebregeorgis (2016) argues that for peace to prevail and grant sustainable development, teaching should no longer be limited to academic achievement through facts memorization and knowledge production. However, it should contribute to the learner's intellectual, social and emotional growth. In essence, higher education is where students should be equipped with the necessary tools to embrace diversity, value different perspectives, and harmoniously co-exist with the other through a culture of peace. To this end, in addition to raising the students' awareness of their rights and obligations towards the other, promoting critical thinking, logical reasoning and independent evaluation skills should be at the heart of the contributions of a tolerance imbued education (UNESCO, 1995). That being said, EFL courses could serve as a channel through which university teachers can transmit values of openness to other cultures, appreciation of the other and respect for differences due to the inherently multicultural and multilingual nature of the subject.

The concept of peace education

The literature shows that the basic concept of peace seems to be a controversial issue that scholars perceive differently. This seems to be the case, for the concept of peace varies according to the numerous perspectives and dimensions. In detail, while it might be simply defined as equivalent to merely the absence of war (Galtung, 1967), Balasooriya (2001) insists that it encompasses more than that stating that it rather denotes the absence of all sorts of violence and encourages harmonious interactions and discourages hurtful acts. Similarly, Barash and Charles (2014) maintain that peace incorporates fostering positive and life-affirming values and social structures. The difference between the above-mentioned views might be solved in terms of distinguishing between negative peace (Galtung, 1967), which denotes the absence of war and focuses on preventing conflicts and violence as a primary goal, and positive peace (Galtung, 1967), which involves establishing positive life-enhancing values and solid social structures and aims for sustainable harmonious ties within and among peaceful societies. Another aspect of peace arises in the context of eliminating structural violence in social, economic and political systems. Galtung (1969) argues that for structural peace to be achieved, institutions and structures need to grant all members of the society impartial access to resources and opportunities. Alternatively, Boulding (2000) defines peace from a cultural perspective stating

that the promotion of cultural values, attitudes and practices secures mutual respect, acceptance, coexistence and even cooperation in a diversified context. Hence, cultural peace stands for celebrating diversity. Another perspective calls for a holistic approach to peace that considers the personal, social and ecological dimensions. Relatively, Lederach (1995) suggests that peace is a dynamic, interdependent process which encompasses the well-being of the individual, the promotion of justice in the society, and the preservation of the environment. In a nutshell, peace seems to possess a panoramic feature which touches upon several life facets encompassing the social, cultural, economic and ecological. Therefore, this concept could not be promoted unless a culture of peace[1] prevails. This latter stems from the individual, inner peace (Balasooriya, 2001), and branches into the social and natural. Balasooriya (2001) argues that the culture of peace is built upon the consideration of the three sources of peace all together, namely inner peace, social peace and peace with nature.

With this in mind, it should be noted that peace education in this study is multidimensional and entails teaching students all aspects of peace from the basic underlying aim of initiating harmony, friendship and understanding between individuals and nations to including peaceful and diplomatic ways to manage and resolve conflicts, appreciation and respect for cultural diversity and all sorts of differences, social responsibility, inter alia.

The Relevance of Peace Education in Higher Education

Since higher education is a pivotal phase that shapes the current and future life of students, the integration of peace education principles is highly relevant and significant at this level, for it promotes critical thinking, encourages social coexistence and cohesion, and produces global citizens.

The nature of courses and lectures at the level of higher education aims at developing students' critical thinking and triggering their analytical mechanisms. Of course, the integration of peace education in higher education curricula complies with this objective; It provides an occasion for university students to critically analyse the distinct reasons behind conflict, violence and injustice and promote their deeper insight into the impact of the complex social, political and economic systems. In this connection, Galtung (1969) states that peace education offers students an opportunity to scrutinize the underlying factors of conflict,

1- Article 1 of The United Nations' declaration on the culture of peace defines the latter as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life based on: respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation' (UN 1999).

including inequality, discrimination, and shortage of resource, the thing which arms them with practical involvement in relation to conflict resolution and peace building. Furthermore, Bajaj (2008) argues that the interdisciplinary feature of peace education equips students with a holistic approach notion and teaches them to analyse matters while taking into consideration manifold perspectives.

The promotion of social coexistence, cohesion and inclusivity stems from higher education institutions which constitute mirrors of the larger society in the sense that they provide a convenient setting for different backgrounds to interact and co-exist. In view of this, the integration of peace education into the higher education curricula would serve in teaching students in context through fostering respect for diversity, be it cultural, ethnic, or religious and teaching students not only to appreciate the other and celebrate all sorts of differences but also to constructively manage interpersonal and group conflicts through empowering them with conflict resolution and mediation skills. Johnson & Johnson (2009) believe that this goes beyond enhancing the climate in-campus to application in further settings such as workplaces and communities. Emotional intelligence is another aspect built in the context of the university through the integration of peace education by means of enabling students not only to acknowledge the others and listen to them but also to offer them the chance to understand them and even share their feelings. Goleman (1995) argues that this step is vital for the development of positive relationships and building community ties.

Within the context of globalization, universities are held responsible for producing a mindset that is prepared to live, behave, and positively contribute to a peaceful interconnected world. Higher education is the phase where students' global awareness is developed together with a sense of responsibility towards our shared world through exposure to global challenges including human rights, ecological conservancy, and multinational disputes. Furthermore, the integration of peace education at the university level enables students to establish moral integrity as a result of scrutinizing the ethical and moral aspects of peace.

In short, the relevance of peace education to higher education is underscored by its potential to nurture critical thinking, develop social cohesion, and produce global citizens. Put differently, the incorporation of peace education into the curricula provides university students with the necessary tools for a better contribution to a more peaceful and just coexistence. Worthy of note is that as long as higher education continues to align with the weight of the complex interconnected global society, integrating peace education into the curricula will always be indispensable for the cultivation of future leaders and change makers.

The Integration of Peace Education into EFL Classrooms

Having shed light on the significance of peace education in higher education, this section aims to emphasize the significance of peace education in EFL classrooms together with the efficient strategies of integrating peace education into higher education EFL curricula and the adversities that impede its effective incorporation.

Due to their inherently multicultural feature, university EFL classrooms remain uniquely positioned to incorporate peace education and equip students with enhanced intercultural communication, critical thinking and empathy; Bajaj (2008) insists that peace education fosters critical thinking regarding global issues among students and encourages them to empathize with others. It also provides them with holistic language learning. In this context, Cates (1990) affirms that it is through integrating peace education that language learning becomes more meaningful and engaging, for learning EFL becomes connected to real-world issues and experiences. He further argues that relevance keeps students motivated to improve their language skills as they discuss and reflect on current issues; they perceive their language learning as more meaningful and pertinent. Also, the objectives of peace education align with those of EFL in the sense that they both aim to promote communication, intercultural understanding, and shared respect among students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Hence, the incorporation of peace education into EFL classrooms would elevate students from learning language skills to another level of acquiring the required values and competencies that contribute to building a peaceful and inclusive community.

This could be achieved through numerous venues. First and foremost, peace education can be integrated through the insertion of peace-related units, ideally, or merely rely on material such as texts or media addressing diverse peace-related issues depending on the level of the students. Kirkwood-Tucker (2009) maintains that the discussion of peace-related themes and the language activities related to them enable students to practice language skills, by the same token they explore peace concepts and issues. Similarly, Tulgar (2017) asserts that foreign language teaching materials are also essential in contributing to the learners' cultural accumulation, the inclusion of themes focusing on the concept of peace remains vital for the present and future of mankind. Cooperative learning techniques also proved to be useful in the context of peace education in EFL classrooms in that they develop students' social and interpersonal skills for peaceful coexistence (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In detail, working in group provides a suitable environment for students to develop teamwork, communication, co-existence, and mutual respect. Crookall & Oxford (1990) advise for role-playing and

simulations as efficient tools for teaching peace values and conflict resolution. Students are made aware of the existence of multiple perspectives and ways of resolving disputes through the assumption of distinct roles in simulated peace-related scenarios. Another strategy involves engaging students in Project-Based Learning through assignments that tackle peace issues. Stoller (2006) suggests community service activities, research on peace building efforts, or creating awareness campaigns as an occasion for students to practically make use of their language skills and actively contribute to peace. Furthermore, peace education could be integrated into EFL classrooms through encouraging students to reflect on their own perspectives, values and actions in relation to peace issues. In this respect, Brown (2004) cites Journals, discussions, and self-assessment as pivotal assignments in triggering student's self-awareness and critical thinking skills.

Nonetheless, the integration of peace education into EFL curricula is surrounded by several significant adversities that may be related to the students, context, and teachers as well. As far as students are concerned, two major challenges are at issue. The first concerns the students' level in English, and the second is their lack of motivation. Burns & Joyce (2001) argue that the incorporation of peace education into the curriculum sometimes involves concepts and vocabulary, which becomes an amplified challenge when the student's level in English is low. In relation to students' resistance in the context of peace education, Salomon & Nevo (2002) maintain that it may originate from students' lack of involvement, perceived irrelevance or cultural differences. The context of teaching involves the classroom, the curriculum and the material. Relatively, both large and heterogeneous classes rise as major difficulties that hinder the effective integration of peace education. Grossman et al. (2007) assert that teaching peace education is challenging in the context of a heterogeneous classroom, for it involves nuanced discussions and varying perspectives. Additionally, Johnson & Johnson (2005) view that large classes pose significant challenges in the context of peace education, for this latter involves discussions, group work, among other activities requiring close supervision. Regarding the curriculum, Zhao (2011) insists that curriculum integration requires planning ahead and often fails due to already overburdened schedules. Access to suitable materials tailored to EFL contexts is another challenge highlighted by Bajaj and Hantzopoulos (2016) who advise for peace education materials to be culturally relevant and accessible to EFL learners, instead of relying on inadequate or inappropriate resources. In what concerns teachers related challenges, the issue of the lack of professional training specialized in peace education is emphasized by Harris and Morrison (2012) who underscore the necessity of specialized training in peace education methodologies. Brown (2007) also expresses concern regarding peace education integration that supports

language acquisition while meeting the educational goals of peace education, which he sees difficult to attain, particularly when educators lack training in both fields.

Research methodology

Having shed light on the conceptual framework of peace education, its significance in higher education and integration into EFL courses, this section provides and discusses the methodology whereby data were collected and analyzed.

Research questions

To meet the objectives underlying the present study, three main research questions have been put forward.

1. How do university EFL teachers perceive peace education?
2. What are the strategies they employ in integrating peace education into their EFL classrooms?
3. What are the challenges they face in integrating peace education into their EFL classrooms?

Research design

The study opted for an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design as it relied on both quantitative and qualitative research instruments for data collection. This methodological triangulation is attributed to the aim of the study to pursue holistic analysis scrutinizing the issues related to peace education quantitatively and elucidating and corroborating them qualitatively. Put differently, while the questionnaire was instrumental in developing a panoramic overview in relation to the perception and approaches of integrating peace education into EFL classrooms along with the adversities that accompany it, the interview allowed for the exploration of the nuances of these challenges in detail and provided a deeper insight into the strategies followed to serve the purpose.

Research instruments

The questionnaire

The data was initially collected by means of a sociolinguistic questionnaire tailored in light of the research questions. A descriptive survey on Google Forms was developed and conducted. A sample of 96 university EFL teachers submitted their responses online. The content of the questionnaire was divided

into different but complementary parts. The first set includes questions about the background information of the university teachers. The second section is related to general information about their attitudes and perceptions of integrating peace education into their curriculum. The third set of questions targets the pedagogical strategies and their effectiveness in the incorporation of peace education into EFL classrooms. The final section is devoted to eliciting the challenges that persist among university language educators in EFL contexts. The questionnaire enclosed a combination of multiple choice, close-ended, and open-ended questions. It should be recalled that prior to its administration online to the population sample, the questionnaire was first piloted to check its validity and any ambiguities deemed necessary to reconsider.

The interview

The interview was also used in the study to collect qualitative input with respect to the perception of peace education among higher education EFL teachers, their strategies of incorporating it and the challenges they face. Since it is common for data collection instruments to reveal major limitation, which lies in the descriptive nature of the data collected in the case of the questionnaire due to the structured layout of the survey, recourse to the interview was deemed necessary with the aim of compensating for the questionnaire's limitation and relatively increase the validity of the study. Hence, the interview allowed for getting deeper insight into the strategies university EFL teachers follow to integrate peace education into their curriculum as well as the difficulties they encounter. The triangulation of both types of data also sought to check the extent to which the quantitative data are consistent with the EFL teachers of higher education's vivid testimonies. Therefore, the study relied on a semi structured interview guide that incorporated three major sections, each of which aimed to elicit specific information. Whereas the first section is concerned with background information of the informants, section two is devoted to data regarding their perception and strategies of the integration of peace education into the EFL classrooms, and the third section explores the obstacles that hinder the effective integration of peace education into university EFL classrooms through the teachers' lenses.

Analysis and procedures

Given the nature of the collected data and the overall objective of the study, the quantitative data was coded and analyzed in terms of percentages presented in charts, while the qualitative data was coded and presented in terms of vivid statements that validate and further explicate the statistical results with the aim of offering an insightful vision. Accordingly, presenting the data in terms of frequencies was instrumental in identifying patterns, tools, methods, perceptions and challenges of integrating peace education into the higher education EFL

classrooms. By the same token, the conducted interviews revealed the intricacies of these aspects. Note that the data analysis has been organized in light of the research questions addressed and the themes collected through the interview.

Results and discussion

Having shed light on the study's design and methodology through eliciting the way the data were collected and analyzed, this section elucidates, analyzes and discusses the findings with respect to the perception of university EFL teachers of the significance of the integration of peace education into the curriculum, the strategies they employ for its efficient integration and the challenges that hinder this integration. It is important to note that only the patterns of direct interest and pertinence to the scope of the study are discussed. The issues presented in this paper are explored regarding certain determinant variables, namely gender, teaching experience, and the level taught.

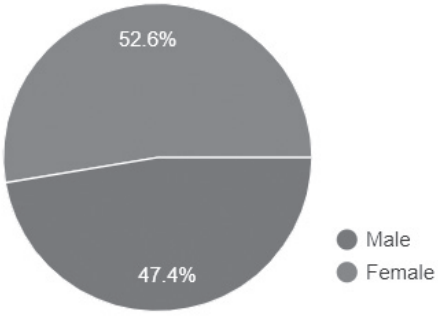

Figure 1: Participants by gender

The present study is based on respondents whose gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight majority of females at 52.6% (see Figure 1). Hence, the perspectives of both male and female are adequately represented in the survey responses, providing a balanced view of the challenges in integrating peace education into EFL classrooms.

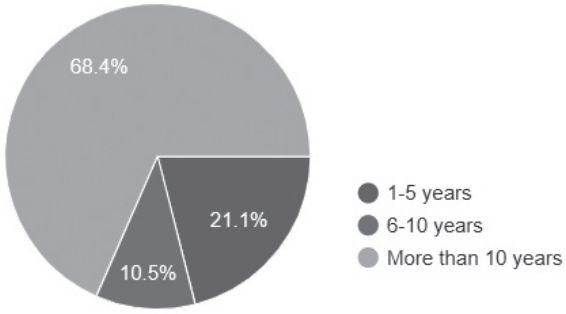

Figure 2: Participants' teaching experience

As far as the participants' teaching experience is concerned, the patterns illustrated in Figure 3 disclose a significant variation between the years of teaching experience among the involved university EFL teachers. In detail, the majority of respondents, at 68.4%, have more than 10 years of teaching experience. This suggests that the insights and ideas presented originate largely from seasoned university EFL teachers. Indeed, this experienced perspective is valuable, for these higher education EFL teachers are more likely to have encountered a wide range of challenges in integrating peace education and solutions in their teaching careers.

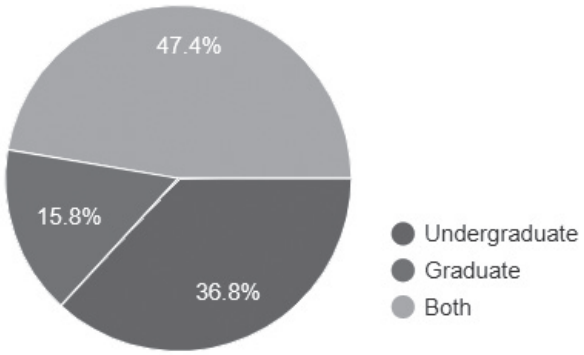

Figure 3: Levels of teaching

Moving to the levels EFL teachers have been assigned, the percentages presented in Figure 3 reveal that almost half of the respondents, at 47.4%, teach both undergraduate and graduate levels, while a significant portion of 36.8% of the involved EFL teachers have only been assigned undergraduates, and below a fifth of the population sample teaches EFL to graduate students. Worthy of note is that, based on this distribution, it could be assumed that the provided feedback is based on experience with a comprehensive range of educational levels; this ensures that the questionnaire results reflect the challenges and strategies applicable to both undergraduate and graduate levels.

In a nutshell, the population sample is fairly gender-balanced and primarily consists of highly experienced university EFL teachers, who teach across various levels of higher education, with a significant representation of those teaching both undergraduate and graduate students. This diverse and experienced respondent pool is promising as the survey findings will be robust and relevant for addressing the challenges of integrating peace education in different educational contexts within higher education EFL classrooms.

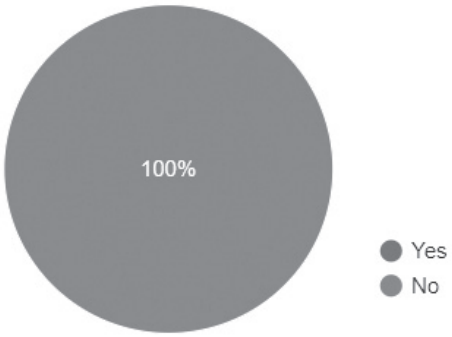

Figure 4: Peace education training

On the other hand, it should not go unnoticed that all respondents (see Figure 4) admitted that they have never received any training in peace education. This reveals a significant gap in professional development and highlights the urgent need for tailored training programs to equip higher education EFL teachers with the necessary skills and efficient tips to integrate peace education.

1. The significance of peace education to higher education EFL classes

In an attempt to attain a holistic picture of the integration of peace education into higher education EFL classroom, the study tries to proceed gradually starting from the elucidation of university EFL teachers' perception of the relevance and significance of peace education to their curriculum.

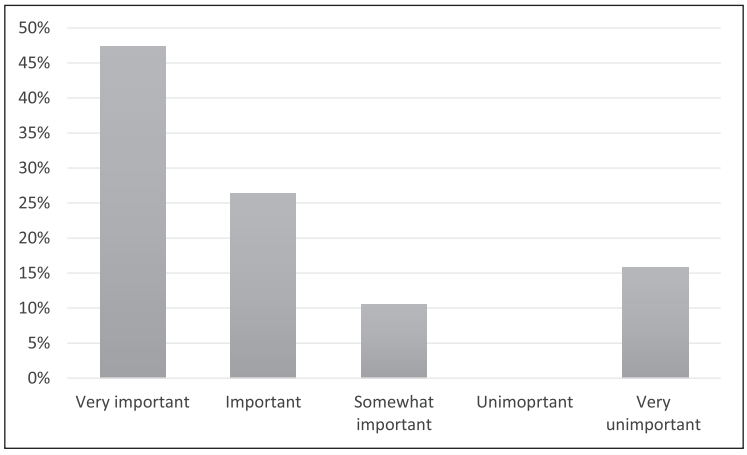

Figure 5: The importance of integrating peace education into EFL classrooms

Results displayed in Figure 5 divulge that the opinions on the importance of integrating peace education into EFL classrooms are varied. In detail, the rate of those who perceive the incorporation of peace education into EFL classrooms as very important is the highest at 47.4%, and just above a quarter of the respondents believe it is important. This cognizance is further corroborated by interview data whereby all the interviewed university EFL teachers voiced their positive perception of the vitality of the concept of peace education. Evidently, Y.L. who teaches at the Shariaa faculty, USMBA states that "Peace education… tries to foster, whatever valuable and positive in people's life, such as behaviors, values, attitudes, skills … Its importance lies in the fact that it helps people live in harmony regardless of their cultural, religious, racial, and political backgrounds.". Another assertion is provided by Z.Z. who teaches at the Educational Sciences faculty, UMV asserting that "peace education involves the communication of peace values such as tolerance, respect and acceptance of difference among other things…It is highly important in my opinion because it can contribute to establishing a more diverse society in which difference is accepted and tolerance reigns". On the other hand, a minority of the population views it as somewhat important and very unimportant at 10.5% and 15.8% respectively. These diversified views reflect varying levels of awareness and prioritization of peace education among higher education EFL teachers; it may also be the result of their personal and professional experiences and the teaching contexts where they are involved. Worthy of recall in this context is the unanimous lack of training in peace education (see Figure 4) as a tool for raising awareness among university EFL teachers who may be unmindful of the merits and relevance of peace education in fostering a more inclusive and empathetic EFL learning environment. There is still a patent need for professional development opportunities including Workshops, seminars, and online courses that aim to provide university EFL educators with the necessary tools and knowledge. Unfortunately, this conclusion touches upon a concern expressed years ago by Brown (2007) and Harris and Morrison (2012) who reported the paucity of professional training specialized in peace education and advised for the organization of specialized training in peace education strategies and methodologies.

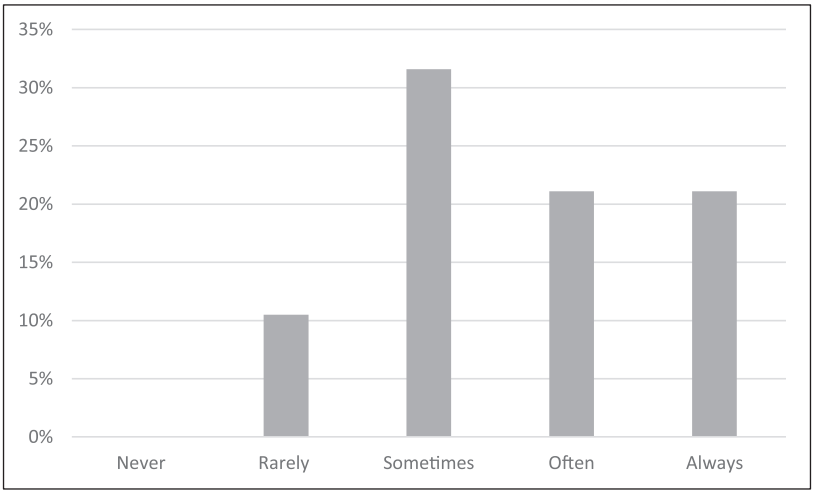

Figure 6: The frequency of Incorporating Peace Education Activities

In the same vein, this study seeks to check whether the reported cognizance of the significance of peace education to EFL students of higher education is translated into actions through checking how often university EFL teachers incorporate peace education into their classroom activities. Accordingly, the percentages indicated in Figure 6 display a varying level of integrating peace education into university EFL classrooms. In other words, while only a small portion of the participants rarely incorporate peace education, the majority incorporate it to varying degrees ranging from sometimes to often to always, at 31.6%, 21.1% and 21.1% respectively. Note that the percentage of those who never incorporate peace education activities into the EFL curriculum is equal to null. This evinces that whereas there is room for improvement, many higher education EFL educators recognize the value of integrating peace education into their EFL classes in both word and deed.

In general, the analysis of the above data mirrors the recognition of the vitality and merit of integrating peace education into higher education EFL classrooms among the majority in spite of the absence of formal training targeting EFL teachers. Still, the significant minority signals an urgent need for professional development and resources in the field of peace education to sensitize university EFL teachers of the importance of peace education and support them in effectively incorporating peace education principles into their teaching practices.

2. The strategies for integrating peace education into university EFL classrooms

Integrating peace education into higher education EFL classes is a multifaceted endeavor that involves a variety of teaching strategies and activities. To this end, this study seeks to investigate the activities and skills involved as part of the university EFL teachers' strategies to integrate peace education into the classroom. Relatively, the percentages illustrated in Figure 7 offer a glimpse into the preferred tasks used for integrating peace education by university EFL educators. More precisely, results reveal a high emphasis on verbal communication as speaking tasks are the most popular method for incorporating peace education among the respondents, at 87.5%. Indeed, practicing dialogues, debates, role playing and presentations remain essential for cultivating EFL learners' ability to voice their opinion in English, negotiate and even resolve conflicts according to Crookall & Oxford (1990). The preference for this interactive method as a means of integrating peace education into the university EFL curriculum may be attributed to the specific feature of communicative language teaching approaches which prioritize real-life communication and social interaction. In addition to speaking tasks, a relatively high percentage indicates a strong preference for using reading materials, at 68.8%. Actually, both channels are mentioned in the qualitative data as Z.Z. who teaches at the Educational Sciences faculty, UMV states that "The way I integrate peace education into my teaching is through the integration of some critical issues in reading comprehension texts, the initiation of group discussions in those subjects, enhancing peace values through discussion and encouraging the questioning of ideas as part of a critical thinking exercise.". Another significant rate of 50%. is recorded for writing tasks as a means of integrating peace education in the university EFL curriculum through encouraging EFL learners' reflective practices and articulation of thoughts and perspectives regarding the theme of peace. It is important to note that the three high percentages of relying on speaking, reading and writing are reminiscent of Tulgar's (2017) assertion that including material involving the four skills remains powerful in exposing students to diverse perspectives and fostering empathy. Indeed, presenting content on peace, human rights, and conflict resolution would surely broaden students' perspectives and encourage critical thinking about global issues, including peace.

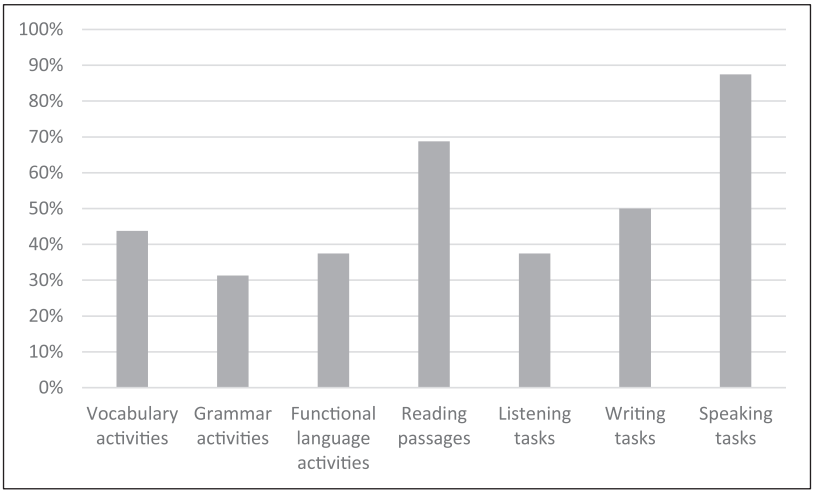

Figure 7: Activities fostering peace education

However, the use of vocabulary activities seems to be relatively moderate with a rate of 43.80%. Still, Tulgar (2017) maintains that the integration of peace-related vocabulary, structures, and proverbs in the target language implicitly convinces the EFL learner that English native speakers, for instance, have a deeply rooted culture of peace which shows through producing phrases and proverbs fostering peace in their language. The percentage of use of activities to teach students practical language skills needed in real-life peacebuilding scenarios, such as making requests, giving suggestions, and expressing opinions is even lower, at 37.50%, so is that of listening tasks, while Grammar activities score the lowest at 31.30%.

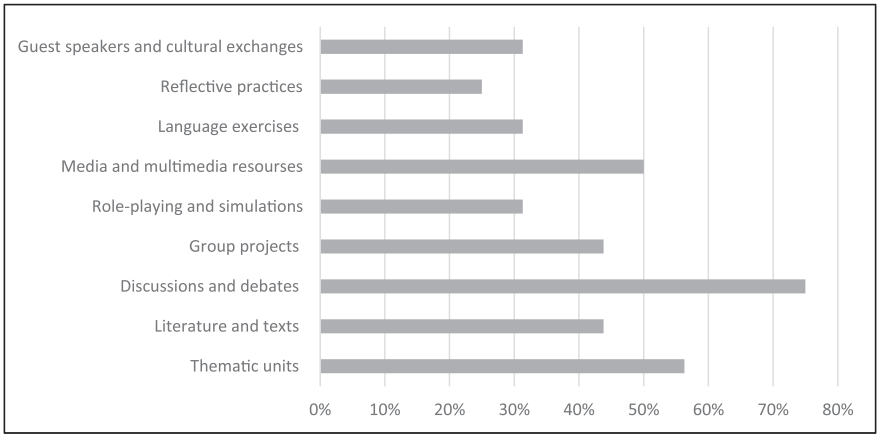

Figure 8: Methods of integrating peace education into EFL classes

With the aim of digging deeper into the strategies for integrating peace education into EFL Classes, the percentages provided in Figure 8 reflect the frequency with which different methods are used to integrate peace education into university EFL classes. The bar chart reveals that discussions and debates are the most popular method of integrating peace education among the involved university EFL teachers with a rate of 75%. This percentage may be explained in terms of the interactive nature of this method which engages students in critical thinking. It also aligns with the high usage of speaking tasks (see Figure 7), which further emphasizes the efficiency of interactive and communicative approaches in peace education. In the context of discussing the strategies that are best for incorporating peace education into the curriculum, A.B. who teaches at the Faculty of Letters & Human Sciences, Dhar El Mahraz, USMBA answered wholeheartedly: "I incorporate peace education through speaking tasks...Apart from group discussions, there is none.". This unreserved testimony further emphasizes the efficiency of integrating peace education through interactive and communicative activities. Other effective and versatile methods that are moderately popular among higher education EFL teachers are thematic units (56.3%), media and multimedia resources (50%), literature and texts (43.8%), and group projects (43.8%). Worthy of note is that the rate of preference of literature and texts as a medium of integrating peace education remains slightly lower compared to the high use of reading passages reported in Figure 7. Conversely, the remaining methods though potentially impactful seem to be relatively underutilized as below a third of the population sample acknowledged the use of role-playing and simulations, language exercises, guest speakers and cultural exchanges, and only a quarter recognized the use of reflective practices as a method of incorporating peace education into the EFL classroom. These results may be explained in terms of practical constraints or the need for specific expertise and resources, which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent section.

Overall, it could be argued based on the quantitative and qualitative data that higher education EFL teachers rely on a comprehensive approach to implementing peace education into their courses with a significant emphasis on certain skills more than others depending on the specificity of each teaching context. However, the diversity of activities and tasks which ensures a holistic approach should go unnoticed, as it is supported by the modern approaches to teaching including the communicative, the content-based and the project-based teaching approaches.

3. The challenges of integrating peace education into university EFL classrooms

There is no doubt that the incorporation of peace education in higher education EFL classrooms presents a unique set of challenges. This section aims to explore the complexities involved in incorporating peace education principles into university classrooms. A closer look at Figure 9 reflects the varying levels of difficulty university EFL teachers face when incorporating peace education into EFL courses.

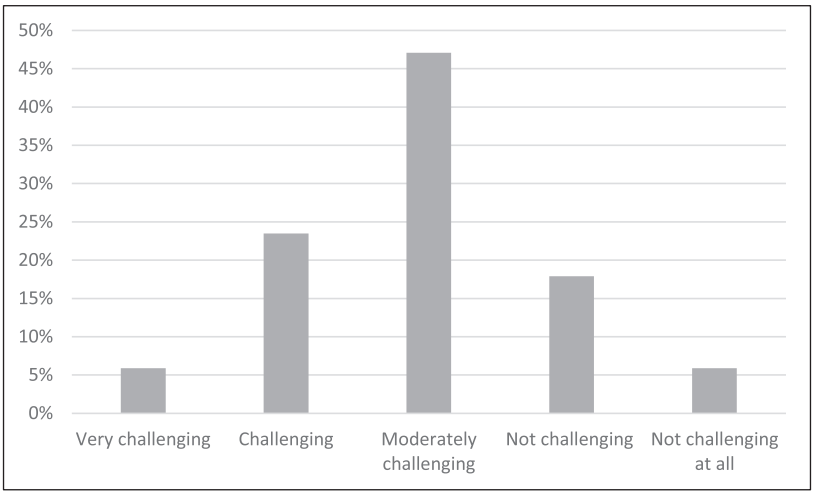

Figure 9: The perception of the integration of peace education into the university EFL curriculum

Indeed, nearly half of the respondents report that they perceive the integration of peace education into the EFL program as moderately challenging, which is the highest percentage in the graph. Also, below a quarter of the participants find it challenging to integrate peace education. This means that though a considerable number of university EFL teachers encounter some obstacles, they manage to incorporate peace education to a certain extent. Put differently, these percentages reveal that though the majority of the involved university EFL teachers recognize certain adversities, they do not report the integration of peace education into the curriculum to be insurmountable. On the other hand, a smaller, yet notable percentage of teachers do not find it challenging to integrate peace education, at 17.90%. Worthy of note is that the minor percentages at the extremes (5.90% each) designate the presence of both severe obstacles for some specific cases and a highly supportive environment for others.

In order to get a deeper insight into the adversities that obstruct the efficient integration of peace education into higher education classrooms, the study looks into the reasons behind the degree of challenges reported in Figure 9.

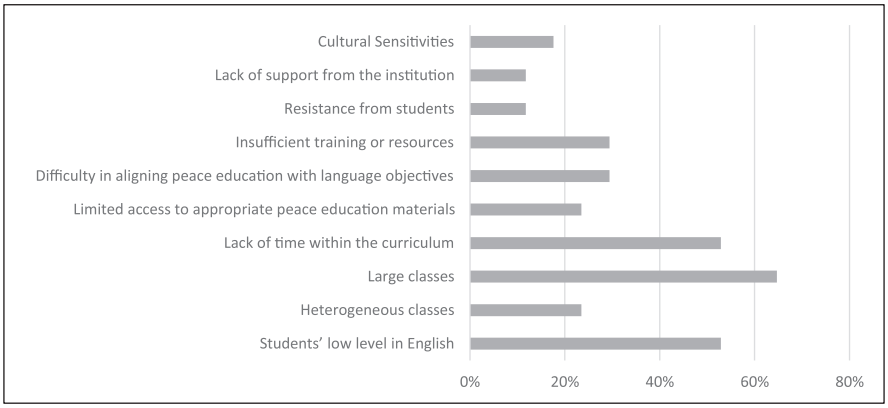

Figure 10: The challenges of integrating peace education into university EFL classrooms

As far as the obstacles that challenge the efficient integration of peace education in higher education EFL classrooms are concerned, the chart in Figure 10 reveals that challenges could be classified into four main categories, namely highly persistent challenges, moderate challenges, notable challenges and minor challenges. Among the persistent challenges are large classes as the highest frequent challenge at 64.70%. This inconvenient teaching circumstance is the reason behind the lower percentages certain interactive strategies recorded in Figures 8 and 9. These statistical results relate to Johnson & Johnson's (2005) conclusion that including peace education in the teaching of large language classes is significantly challenging in that it hinders the proper administration of interactive strategies including in-class discussions, group work, role playing among other activities that necessitate close supervision for an efficient application.

In second place in the bar chart is students' low level in English which is reported by above half the population included in this study as a significant barrier as students may struggle to grasp peace education content in the target language. Accordingly, the qualitative data add to this constraint another limitation related to "…students' limited intellectual level, capacity for critical, analytical and sound thinking." as B.C. who teaches at ENCG Agadir, UIZ, puts it.

Another major issue that is highly reported with a percentage of 52.90% is that the existing curriculum is already tight, leaving no room for additional

content, including peace education. This perception is also recorded in one of the testimonies provided by F.D. who teaches at the Faculty of Languages, Arts and Humanities Ait Melloul, UIZ asserting that: "Given time constraint, the interest falls more on academic activities.". This avowal implies that peace education is not often included in the academic content of the English language program she teaches. This view joins Zhao's (2011) assumption that eventful programs are hard to implement new themes into.

Alternatively, moderate challenges include both difficulty in aligning peace education with language objectives and insufficient training or resources at an equal rate of 29.40%. This finding goes hand in hand with Bajaj and Hantzopoulos's (2016) argument that culturally relevant and accessible material to EFL learners is a major constraint that results sometimes in relying on inadequate or inappropriate peace education resources.

As far as notable challenges are concerned, the patterns illustrated in Figure 10 indicate that mixed ability levels within the same class (23.50%) and the issue of unavailability of suitable materials (23.50%) can pose challenges but are not as significant as large class sizes or low English proficiency. Regarding minor challenges, they include cultural sensitivities (17.60%), resistance from students (11.80%) and lack of support from the institution (11.80%). Worthy of note is that students' resistance is frequently reported in the qualitative data in further detail. For instance, A.C. who teaches at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, UMV testifies that "students are not cooperative as the notion is new for them; they are not used to it.". Additionally, A.A. who teaches at ENS, UMV affirms that "students believe that advocating peace is always done by powerless communities since superpowers only talk about peace and practice it amongst them but never towards powerless communities…"

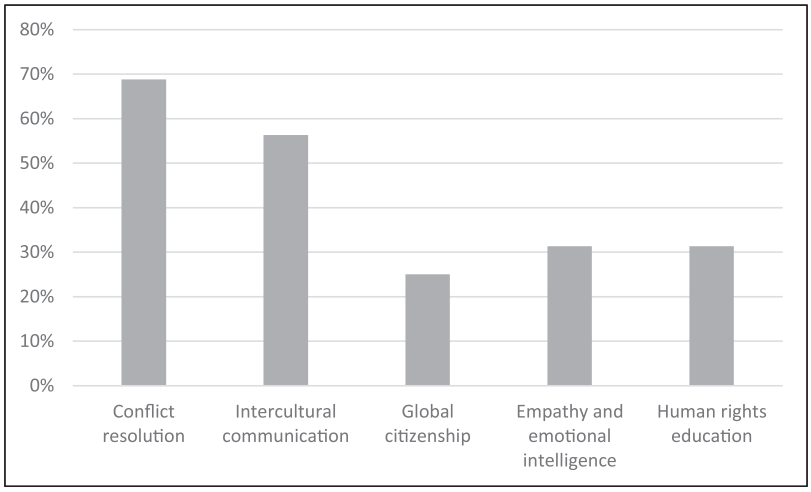

Figure 11: The most difficult aspect of peace education to integrate

Another axis of challenges that may face university EFL teachers may be related to a specific aspect of peace education. To this end, the study tries to depict what specific aspects of peace education they find most challenging to integrate. The figures illustrated in Figure 11 show that conflict resolution is the most difficult aspect to integrate according to the respondents, at 68.80%. A plausible analysis of this high rate is that this aspect implicates complex interpersonal skills, understanding underlying issues, and effective communication. Consequently, the complex nature of these skills together with the need for practical implications such as creating scenarios and role-playing, which are time-consuming and challenging to manage in a classroom according to Johnson and Johnson (2005), let alone large classrooms and diverse ones. Another highly challenging aspect that over half the population perceives as the most difficult to integrate is intercultural communication. This may be attributed to the nature of this aspect which requires understanding and effective communication across different cultures involving both language proficiency and cultural awareness at the same time. Conversely, below a third of the university EFL teachers report empathy and emotional intelligence and human rights education as the most difficult dimension of peace education to integrate into higher education EFL classrooms, while a quarter considers global citizenship as the most challenging.

In a nutshell, integrating peace education into university EFL courses is fraught with challenges. Indeed, the data report logistical and structural issues to be the chief barriers, including large class sizes, low proficiency in English, and

tight curriculum schedule. Secondary challenges include two main interrelated issues, namely aligning peace education with language objectives and insufficient training and resources. This fact underlines the need for professional development in peace education methodology and integration strategies. Furthermore, specific aspects of peace education are reported to be more challenging, such as conflict resolution and intercultural communication, thing which necessitates a holistic reform starting from curriculum design, and professional training to supportive learning environments that allow for advocating for the necessary skills and attitudes for peace education.

Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to contribute to the issue of peace education in the context of teaching EFL at the university level. The data analysis revealed that University teachers perceive the integration of peace education as a vital component into higher education EFL classrooms, as it fosters humanistic values and the cognizance and respect of the other. Indeed, the implementation of peace education themes into the higher education EFL courses is a powerful approach to promoting intercultural understanding, global citizenship, and social justice while enhancing language learning through adopting various strategies. University EFL teachers tend to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences that foster a culture of peace through incorporating peace themes through different language skills, relying on interactive and participatory learning, and engaging in project-based learning, inter alia. Nevertheless, integrating peace education into EFL curricula remains significantly challenging to varying degrees, as identified in both the provided data and related literature. The persisting challenges include teaching context and environment, students' proficiency in English and their involvement, curriculum constraints, and lack of professional training, among others. To address these constraints and ensure more effective and sustainable implementation of peace education in higher education EFL classrooms, a holistic strategic approach should be in effect, including professional development, logistics refinement, curriculum integration, and institutional support. Further research is needed to refine these strategies and understand their impact on both language learning and peacebuilding outcomes.

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Cultivating Universal Values in Moroccan Young Learners : Towards Fostering Peace Education in the Moroccan Primary School Levels : *Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya* (6th Grade) Textbook as a Case Study

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Introduction :

In a turbulent and complex context of identity (trans)formation in the MENA region, peace building and education have gained momentum. Indeed, peace education signifies and produces positive outcomes when capitalized on during childhood phases. Religious and Islamic Education, among other disciplines, is believed to substantially contribute to peace educaton. This paper aims at deconstructing discursive and textual strategies used in the 6th grade's textbook entitled في رحاب التربية الاسلامية Fi *Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya* (Sixth Grade) tracing representational patterns that boost pupils' awareness and foster building peace education skills in their learning. The paper sets to address two main research questions : (How) does the school subject of Islamic Education contribute to peace building and education ? What cultural representations does the textbook under scrutiny make of cultural minority groups in Morocco and beyond? The study uses a qualititative content analysis design deploying thematic analysis of the textbook, ministerial memos, scientific research related to teaching and learning of the subject.

Reforming the Religious Discourse (in Morocco) : Toward Enhancing Peace Education1

Soufiane Khebbaz's doctoral dissertation entitled *Advancing Peace Building Programs to Counter Violent Extremism Messaging in Sidi Moumen District, Morocco* « examines the role of new media in countering violent extremism, preventing

1- AbdelAziz (2021)Tekni states that the subject (Islamic Education) aims at « meet(ing) the spiritual, societal and survival needs of learners

youth radicalization and fashioning political and religious discourse throughout the implementation of the "Youth Leaders for Peace" project » ». (Soufiane Khebbaz, 2023 : Abstract) The researcher states that « The purpose of this study was to promote youth in peacebuilding programmes and allow them to share their perspectives on civic engagement and political participation.[2] (Soufiane Khebbaz, 2023 :162-3)

Kenda A. Taylor conducted a study in Ksar El Kebir Morocco in an attempt to « understand how the Skills for Constructive Living peace education program influenced a particular group of participants in Ksar El Kebir, Morocco in terms of attitudes, perceptions, sense of empowerment and problem solving skills. » Her study concludes that

> three key things can be implied about the program, and more broadly, about the field of peace education. First, gender must be considered when planning and implementing a peace education program…. Second, the utility of English a foreign language in peace education is considered given the overwhelmingly positive response of participants to the use of English in this program…. Third, this study points to the importance of evaluation for peace education efforts.

Abu-Nimer similarly finds out that

> This Islamic framework of peace education is defined by the assumption that the primary message of Islam is peace and that certain sets of values and beliefs should constitute the foundation for engaging youth and adults: Sacredness of human life; Adala (Justice); Mossawat (equality); Rahma (mercy); Mosamaha (forgiveness); A'mal al kheir (good deeds and action/ service); Solidarity. Within this framework of Islamic peace education, there is an emphasis on the need to recognize the fundamental principle of pluralism and diversity (ikhtilaf). Peace education according to the Islamic framework has the theological foundations to educate the person to observe the above values and adopt rituals that aim to preserve such values and beliefs. (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 : 160)

2- He adds that the study « was based on three main objectives designed to raise awareness among young people about peaceful coexistence, mechanisms of tolerance, and conflict resolution to let them avoid violent extremism…. In addition, the study was designed to determine the impact of youth contribution in media interventions and local public governance to reduce youth radicalisation. (Soufiane Khebbaz, 2023 : 163)

Harris Ian's paper

> traces the evolution of peace education theory from its roots in religious traditions of love, compassion, charity, and tolerance to modern theories based on reducing the threats of interpersonal and environmental violence. This brief review of some main contributors to peace education theory gives rise to five general areas where peace education is introduced in the 21st century : (1) human rights education, (2) environmental education[3], (3) international education, (4) conflict resolution education, and (5) development education. (Harris, Ian M., 2002)

Abu-Nimer's study of the centrality of Quranic Schools (QSs) to the Muslim world and Morocco in particualr is equally worthwhile. He contends that

> It is important to recognise that QSs have been part of the fabric of Muslim societies for centuries (Riaz 2008). Records of the establishment of the first QSs in the form of madrasas [Arabic for schools ; from darasa, to study] go back to the 11th century (Anzar 2003, p. 3) …. Within Muslim societies, the function of these schools is not limited simply to providing literacy and faith education to less-developed, lowincome and more remote areas. Parents whose children attend these schools often feel that QSs "instill values … indispensable to living successful and virtuous lives" while also providing "an educational foundation upon which children can facilitate further learning" (Soni 2013). Teachers in QSs and the schools themselves are often highly respected in their communities. »[4] (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 :156)

Youssef ElAlamy posits that Moroccan religious education has to be bi-dimensional. He urges stakeholders « to build quality education, and a learner imbued with religious and national values, possessing the required competencies

3- El Alamy comments: « The existential purpose… is determined by taking the initiative to achieve benefits for the individual and society: charity, solidarity, and cooperation; protecting the environment is evidence of complete faith. » (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)

4- Post May 2003 in Morocco many of these school were foced to close and blamed of being a nest for generating discourses of hatred, extremism and terrorism. In a footnote, AbuNimer urges the reader to « see the Implementing (of) the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007 (United States Congress 2007), which would require the Administration to submit an annual report on the efforts of Muslim countries to increase availability of modern state-funded education. (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 :158). Abu-Nimer believes that « Despite the deeply ingrained nature of QSs in many Muslim societies, they have fallen under the scrutiny of policymakers and been accused of being manufactures of exclusion, intolerance, extremism and even violence in the name of religion. (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 :157)

cognitively, skillfully, and emotionally. » (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024) The reform in the subject of Islamic Education is timely and carries beneath some urgency to counter discourses of extremism and terrorism that are incrementally growing.[5] ElAlamy explains that « The Islamic Education curriculum is also considered an educational document that came as a result of social, cultural and developmental transformations which Morocco is witnessing, rationalizing religious discourse, renewing the role of religion and its scholars in the life of the nation, and responding to the royal speech in the city of Laayoune February 6, 2016 AD, »[6] (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)

The main concern are means and ways to undo global power dynamics in instituting the desired reform. Abu-Nimer asserts that

> Following the events of 9/11, many misconceptions entered the policymaking platform with regard to the need for education reforms in the Muslim world. Based upon Western cultural and societal norms and increased scepticism of the role of religion in violence, these assumptions have triggered a strong wave of calls for a topdown approach to reform formal state schools in predominantly Muslim countries.[7] (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 :154)

Sarah Schmidt's study of peace pedagogy is very pertinent. She posits that « If peace pedagogy is a normative approach to teaching and learning that aims to reduce violence in all its forms through liberatory methods, critical peace pedagogy integrates peace pedagogy with critical pedagogical methods, thus incorporating the shared vision of *transformation* ». She substantiates her argument writing : « Counterhegemonic in essence, the incorporation of critical pedagogies deepens the scope of peace pedagogy to create a method that is "forged with, not for, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity" (Freire, 1970, p.48). Consistent with both critical theory and peace

5- Abdelaziz Tekni (2021), however, interrogates : « What is the position of the nation's identity within the overall framework of reforming Islamic education curricula? Does reforming Islamic education curricula have the potential to contribute to the crystallization of a societal reform project that improves the conditions of our educational system ? »

6- A. Tekni, in the same vein, argues that « After the statement issued by the Royal palace following the Ministerial Council meeting held in the city of Laayoune last February, which included a call on the government to "review the curricula and programs for teaching Islamic Education courses." (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021).

7- He expounds writing : « Since 9/11, there has been increasing interest in strengthening education in the Muslim world ; in particular, significant emphasis has been placed on implementing curricular reforms which promote pluralism, dialogue, citizenship and co-existence as tools to fight extremism. » (Mohammed Abu-Nimer et al, 2017 :154)

theory, critical peace pedagogy represents an educative practice that is founded on equal distribution of power and agency. Knowledge acquisition thus becomes an act of humanization, essential to the process of peacebuilding ».

Building Peace Education in Moroccan Islamic Education Studies : *Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamia* (Sixth Grade) as a Case Study

Amazigh identity and culture are expressed mainly through the anthroponomy and names of the characters who are appropriately chosen to reveal an identity belonging[8]. These names include Toumert[9] (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 8) Annir (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 66) Numidia (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 85), Mira (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 87), Your (probably Ayyour is meant *Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 91). Religious minorities are equally granted some textual space. The Jewish component of Moroccan identity construcion showcases in the syllabus' attempts at fostering the culture of coexistance through : « Regulating relationships with non-muslims (Jews) (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*». The textbook explicitly ackowledges other religions in that it requests the young learners to « state names of other holy books and to whom they were revealed. (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 75) »[10]

The multifaceted aspects of Moroccan history acknowledge the impact of diverse (non)European civlizations on Moroccan (Moorish) culture. Vandals, Romans, Greeks, Byzantins, Othomans among others, had influeneced the civilizational make-up of the country. The book under study provides hints at the Christian component. Mary (Jesus' mother) is represented as « well-bred, and the best of the world's women. »[11] (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 21) The textbook

8- Houssine Soussi, *Amazigh International Film Festivals and the Promotion of Amazigh Cinema*, Ph.D. The 2nd Annual Kurultai of the Endangered Cultural Heritage, AKECH 2019, p. 160. Traditional Moroccan names and even names that vindicate the African dimension of Moroccan cultural identity construction are used. We find in the textbook Moroccan traditional names like 'Es-Salka'(*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 34) and we are told that « a group of children encircle sheikh Mamadou in the mosque learning and studying the Koran » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 94)

9- Mourad insists on visting the tomb of his grandmother 'Toumert' (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya'* : *Teacher's Guide* :8)

10- Names of Prophets sent to previous people (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 7) : « I write answers to the following questions : State names of some Messengers who were sent to their people according to the Surath Alhaqqa » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya' : Teacher's Guide* :7), an example is Noah (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 11)

11- Mary is also depicted as dignified and chaste. We read in the textbook « Chastity, dignity (Mary May Allah be pleased with her)(*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 52-54). It can be also assumed that the name Mira (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 87) has English origin and a derivation of the name Mary.

importantly insinuates that Muslim faith rests on believing in previous prophets and messengers. It instigates learners to express their standpoins regarding « a person believing in Mohamed pbuh and not in Jesus pbuh »(*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 75)

It is assumed that Muslim Women are oppressed because of their religion implying that their fellow counterparts in secularist systems are freer and more empowered. The textbook writes back to this claim and creates ample discursive space for women as 'men's companions ». The children learn about Khadija (prophet's pbuh wife (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 13), and they are asked to « value women who are cited in the Koran and testify for their benevolence and that women are men's partners in rights and obligations. »[12] (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 20) Paraoh's wife Assia is also depicted as: « docile and ascetic » (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 22) ElAlamy, in this regard, explains that

> The human rights goal… is based on four major human rights values, which are freedom (freedom from all restrictions and shackles), justice (the believer's rule with justice even if only for himself and his relatives), equality (no discrimination between people), and dignity (The pride of an individual is not diminished by power, authority, ignorance, poverty, or custom.) (ElAlamy, 2024)

It is apparent that the textbook under study fosters and celebrates human universal values.[13] Peace, co-existence, forgiveness, alterity and many others are spotlighted in the textbook. Cleanliness (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 15), acceptance of difference, be it physical, mental or spiritual: « I consider my abilities not handicaps » (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 22) (Figure 3); « How to behave with the deaf and blind » (*Fi Rihah Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 33). AbdelAziz Tekni argues, in this respect, that « What makes it (Islamic Studies) the basis for building a good human being and citizen capable of spreading the values of goodness in his society, developing his intellectual and mental skills, and consolidating the values of coexistence, human commonality, citizenship, and acceptance of others ». (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021)

12- The traits Khadija, the spouse of the prophet Mohamed PBUH, used to decribe him are : « Visiting family members, patience, helping the needy, hosting the guest,… » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya' : Teacher's Guide* : 11)

13- A. Tekni believes that « Education on values is an urgent educational and cultural necessity, and a necessary condition for citizenship and development. » (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021)

The image is relatively present in the textbook. Nassiri hypothecizes that « If the textbook, in general, does not contain activities related to the image (static or moving), how can we achieve the learner's immunity against violence, extremism, and all forms of violence, in the time of images, and even in the time of presenting each aspect of life as images ? » (Al-Habib Nassiri, 2020) The learner is exposed to some images (Tarawih prayers (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p.18.), Creation (Figure 1) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 26), blessings[14]: food (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*' , p. 28), flying birds (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 29), fœtus in his mom's womb (Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya', p. 33), flowing waters (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* pp. 33 &45, rescue (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 42), road safety (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 54) ; a child prostrating (Figure 2) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya* , p. 65)

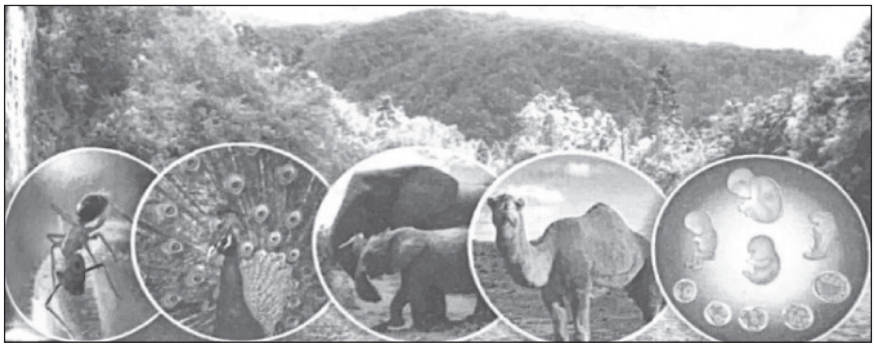


Fig1. Divine Creation



Fig 2. A child praying and prostrating

14- The textbook raises the learneres' awareness about « gratitude for Allah for His blessings and protection (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*' p. 29) and that they have to express « gratitude for latent and manifest blessings » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 45)

Mother Assia (Pharaoh's wife) hosting prophet Moses and believing in him (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 19) ; People with special needs' rights (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 22) (Fig. 3)



Fig 3. People with special needs

Nassiri points out that « Three main values can be consolidated in the Moroccan school if we give importance to the image and use it as a useful means in the learning process. I specifically refer to the national, moderately religious and the globally humanistic values. (Al-Habib Nasiri, 2020).

Indeed human values[15] that sustain the common good prevail in the textbook. Peace, solidarity (figure 4), forgiveness and patience are axes these values are built on.



Fig4. Mohamed V Foundation for Solidarity

15- ElAlamy affirms that « Values and educating learners on them are among the most important things that Moroccan educational documents focus on, as stated in the National Charter, the Strategic Vision, the White Book, curriculum updates, frames of reference and official notes... » (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)

Patience primes over other values in that learners are oftentimes sensitized about its centrality in the life of a believer. Patience and yielding (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 46), the value of patience (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 54), patience in misfortune (the story of Al Yasser) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, pp. 62-63). The textbook equally foregrounds different aspects of Mohamed's pbuh patience : He « did not insult back, did not respond to violence with violence (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 47) and urges learners to « emulate Allah's Messenger in his patience, kindness » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya* ,p. 47), and to « train myself on being patient » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 65) and discussing « the role of misfortunes (the story of garden people) in partaking life lessons (i.e. behavior change.) » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, pp. 69 & 71)

Moroccanness in shared values is given a substantial space in the textbook's attempt at instilling values of coexistence, peace and love in Moroccan young learners. Nassiri asserts that : « it is an image that matters for society as a whole, in which the images of others do whatever they want without enabling learners to create their own image according to their values and according to what exists in their societal, cultural, historical, and spiritual contexts (Al-Habib Nassiri, 2020). ElAlamy expounds on this argument contending that young learners should be imbued with « … pride in religious and national identity, openness to the values of contemporary civilization, familiarity with the values of modernity, democracy, human rights, and adherence to the values of justice and tolerance » (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)[16] . The textbook, in this respect, spotlights that tolerance=safety (road etiquette) (Figure 5) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 54).

16- Nassiri posits that « National values, or the nation as a value, are a set of spatial and temporal determinants and multiple loads, which determine the nature of the homeland as a value, identity, and as an educational, scientific, legal, cultural, and civilizational dimension, etc., the learner must be satisfied with. He cherishes it, and even defends it inside and outside the homeland, and in different situations. The learner should be proud of his national flag as a symbol referring to its national foundations and all their manifestations and components. » (Al-Habib Nassiri, 2020)

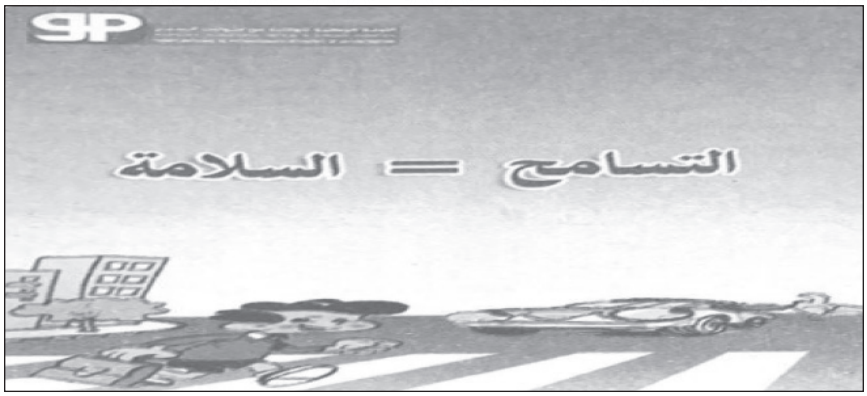


Fig. 5: Road Safety; Tolerance= Safety

The value of forgiveness is also foregrounded in the textbook. Praying for believers to have forgiveness and mercy (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 11); Prophet Mohamed's forgiveness for his people upon his return to Mekka (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 78-9)[17] ; stimulating the feeling of mercy. (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 35) The textbook invites the students to reflect on the the following situation: « Zineb refuses to forgive whoever mistreats her, what's her friend's (Your's) advice in your opinion? (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 91)

Good planning, time management, kowledge seeking are represented as common traits of a good believer. Knowledge seeking and rewarding actions and purging my heart (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 17), knowledge seeking during Ramadan (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 67); truth-seeking: « I know the importance of knowing the truth of things; freedom of expression and opinion »; planning, management and organisation (for Ramadan *Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 19) and time management and meditation of the universe (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 26)

Sustainable environment has become a universal concern nowadays. The textbook raises the young learners' awareness to its critical importance (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 29) Nassiri suggests that « For any form of violence, either against humans, animals, places, or public property, which we all have to deal with it, from the position that it is part of a national capital, beneficial to everyone. » (Al-Habib Nasiri, 2020). The learner is required to « demonstrate

17- It is important to note the « Situated learning : the story of Noah PBUH (Oh Allah forgive my people because they don't know/understand » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya' : Teacher's Guide* :5)

the importance of water in human, animal and plants' life. » (Figure 6) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. (33)

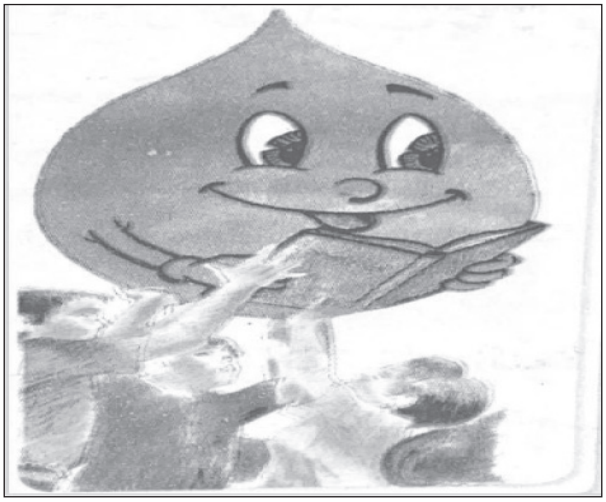


Fig. 6 : Water Sustainability

The holy month of Ramadan and the values associated with it are oftentimes broached in the textbook. The learner is supposed to « learn that fasting is honour and praise from Allah which deters the believer from whims and desires (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 51) ; Ramadan as a month of generosity (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 67) ; benefits of fasting : avoidance of gossip (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 87), badmouthing and talking nonsense (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 17) and wrongdoings, feeling of union, cooperation and solidarity 'Mohamed V Foundation for Solidarity (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 70).[18]

Official specifications for the teaching and learning of the subject aim at « form(ing) a Moroccan citizen who is proud of his homeland, his civilizational, religious and cultural identity and all universal human values, but also there is a strong desire to make this Moroccan open to other religions, tolerant, coexistent, and involved in building civilization for humanity as a whole, through its cognitive, scientific and technological learning »[19] (Al-Habib Nasiri, 2020).

18- An example of wrongdoing presented is « A child disturbing people while praying tarawih and the complete opposite » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 19)

19- El Alamy endorses this viewpoint writing : « Curriculum developments for primary education: Specifications related to values are focused on at the end of the primary cycle, for example : To make the learner adhere to religious, national and humanitarian values, to the spirit of solidarity, tolerance and integrity, and to the principles of prevention, health and environmental protection (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)

Acceptance of the culturally different others is the cornerstone of peace education across ages, religions, genders, and classes. Dialogizing difference (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 36 &38) ; the etiquette of dialogue with heedless, astray people (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 37) (Abraham pbuh and his father) ; dialogue with older people emulating Abraham pbuh (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 37); dialogue, conversation and negotitation (Abraham pbuh with his people) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 36) ; leniency with whoever is different in opinion in trying « to be kind to them, I be proud of my religion and I guide people to it wisely and in good advice (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 37)/ and interestingly Peace & love[20] (Figure 7) (Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya', p. 38)

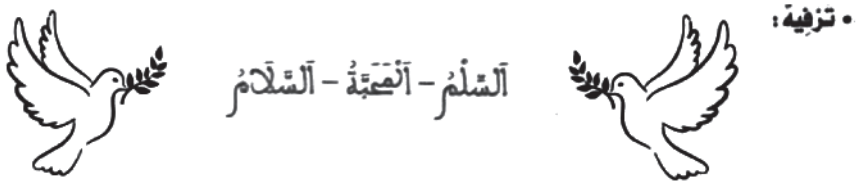


Fig. 7 : Peace- Love

The learner is advised to be « just, preserve my dignity and never violate the dignity of others nor denigrating them, nor humiliating them in their honor » and to « understand and never accuse » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 52). Silence is a virtue not a weakness (Mary pbuh when accused) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 53); blaming the innocent and its impact[21] (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 53). In the *teacher's guide*, we read that « In the wisdom axis, the purpose is uplifting the level of behaviour to character refinement position… representing the etiquette of dialogue (the story of Abaraham PBUH) and understanding and avoidance of blaming others (the story of Lady Mary May Allah be pleased with her) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya: Teacher's Guide* : Introduction)

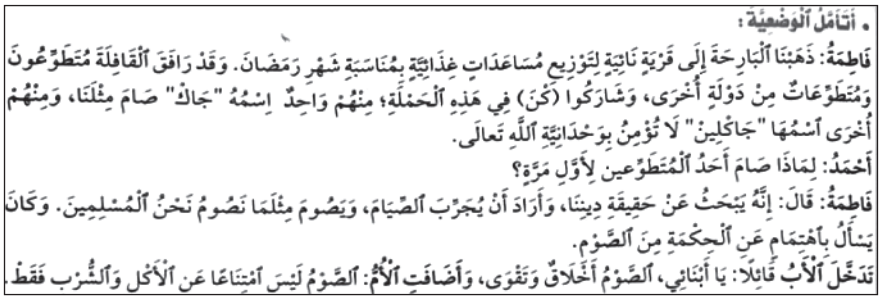
Soufiane Khebbaz recommends that an environment conducive to culture of peace necessitates

20- The why of including it under the rubric of 'entertainment' is yet to be subverted.

21- The learners are sensitized to the negative impact of value judgement. They are asked to « analyze Madness ascription to the sane and its impact » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 57)

Create(ing) a network of partners on the subject of peacebuilding and conflict transformation to improve the discourse on tolerance[22], violence, and women's rights ; target(ting) at-risk populations better to widen the scope of the training for those who face the threat of "Daeshisation" today, e.g. marginalised youth, reinforce(ing) the understanding of religious themes among youth to allow them to engage in more conscious dialogue, offer(ing) a particular attention to students in high schools who are increasingly targeted by violent extremist discourse, equip(ping) leaders and religious mediators with a discourse that is accessible and allows a real debate with marginalised youth, reinforce(ing) positive engagement of religious leaders by involving them increasingly in project activities, involve(ing) more youth impacted by "Youth Leaders for Peace" in the formulation of content for chababe.ma to create a communal platform.[23] (Soufiane Khebbaz, 2023 :166)

Community service and sustaining the culture of difference are interwoven in the textbook. The importance of « voluntary work to a rural area to help the needy, solidarity) : Moroocans and non-Moroccans : Jack fasting like Muslims, Jacqueline as an atheist. » (figure 8) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 39)



• أَتَأَمَّلُ ٱلْوَضْعِيَّةَ :

فَاطِمَةُ: ذَهَبْنَا ٱلْبَارِحَةَ إِلَى قَرْيَةٍ نَائِيَةٍ لِتَوْزِيعِ مُسَاعَدَاتٍ غِذَائِيَّةٍ بِمُنَاسَبَةِ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ. وَقَدْ رَافَقَ ٱلْقَافِلَةَ مُتَطَوِّعُونَ وَمُتَطَوِّعَاتٌ مِنْ دَوْلَةٍ أُخْرَى، وَشَارَكُوا (كُنَّ) فِي هَذِهِ ٱلْحَمْلَةِ؛ مِنْهُمْ وَاحِدٌ ٱسْمُهُ "جَاكْ" صَامَ مِثْلَنَا، وَمِنْهُمْ أُخْرَى ٱسْمُهَا "جَاكْلِينْ" لَا تُؤْمِنُ بِوَحْدَانِيَّةِ ٱللَّهِ تَعَالَى.

أَحْمَدُ: لِمَاذَا صَامَ أَحَدُ ٱلْمُتَطَوِّعِينَ لِأَوَّلِ مَرَّةٍ؟

فَاطِمَةُ: قَالَ: إِنَّهُ يَبْحَثُ عَنْ حَقِيقَةِ دِينِنَا، وَأَرَادَ أَنْ يُجَرِّبَ ٱلصِّيَامَ، وَيَصُومَ مِثْلَمَا نَصُومُ نَحْنُ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ. وَكَانَ يَسْأَلُ بِٱهْتِمَامٍ عَنِ ٱلْحِكْمَةِ مِنَ ٱلصَّوْمِ.

تَدَخَّلَ ٱلْأَبُ قَائِلًا: يَا أَبْنَائِي، ٱلصَّوْمُ أَخْلَاقٌ وَتَقْوَى، وَأَضَافَتِ ٱلْأُمُّ: ٱلصَّوْمُ لَيْسَ ٱمْتِنَاعًا عَنِ ٱلْأَكْلِ وَٱلشُّرْبِ فَقَطْ.

Fig. 8 : Situated Learning: Community Service and Acceptance of Difference

Nassiri contends that « These tolerant religious values are intended to make the Moroccan learner proud of his moderate and tolerant Islamic religion and coexistence with the rest of the other celestial religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and even positive religions with the non-believer, and any divine or man-made religion. » (Al-Habib Nasiri, 2020) Values of « Social Action Club in your friend's (Ouadiaa's) school (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 95),

22- AbdelAziz Tekni writes : « The material that carries the values of mercy, tolerance and dialogue » (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021)

23- Sara Schmidt qualifies this daeshization as a « 'culture of militarization that engulfs youth, about which much has been written in critical education" (Borg and Grech, 2017, p.172).

fundraising for elderly and orphan centers (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 95); the young learner is equally invited to reflect on « the rights of the elderlies on us and society as a whole ? » (Figure 9) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*' p. 95)



Fig. 9 : Taking Care of the Elderly

The culture of human rights is highlighted. The learners are asked to « prepare the lesson on other people's rights, to know their rights. » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 83) Learners are asked about their thoughts regarding this situation: « Samir is a good person but he doesn't spare time for his family and friends. » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 84). They are also required to « acquire (that) : others' rights are legitimate rights that Allah orders me to abide by, being faithful to them is a great worship, (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 84) and to « write some aspects of undermining the importance of others' rights and suggest solutions (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 86) and interestingly to « prepare a leaflet with my team on environmnetal rights (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 84) Neighbour's right and kin's rights[24] (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 84), envirornmental rights : (what do you think about whoever squanders water ? What's your advice for them? (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 86) ElAlamy, in this respect, concedes that « importance to education on Tolerant Islamic values, at the core of which is the Maliki doctrine, calling for moderation, tolerance, and coexistence with different cultures and civilizations » (Youssef ElAlamy, 2024)

Choosing good company is a value that all civilzations celebrate. It is recommneded that the young learners « befriend good-mannered people and pray to Allah to guide me to good morals. » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 57) Learners are advised to « mix up with the good and befriend the righteous (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 85) , and to « get to know the importance of good

24- Family dialogue and gathering : polite communication. Nassiri argues that « in this time in which everyone complains about the deterioration of these values, including the family, which for socio-economic reasons, we might say, has in turn "abandoned" its educational duties associated with raising children in school, at a time when other soft powers are getting strengthened. » (Al-Habib Nasiri, 2020)

company to know the rights of the self[25] (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 84) The students are tasked to « present a friend : praising his qualities, advising him with love and appreciation (constructive criticism does not mean humiliation[26]) and attempt at reflecting on « What we should do when we commit a wrongdoing » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 61)

Selflessness is a commendable attribute that is globally eulogized. « Charity and giving alms to the ones who deserve them…which leads to love between people » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*', p. 68) « Do you consider taking care of the poor one of the human rights ? (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 70). Young learners are instigated to « take care of the poor's right and avoid being unjust to whomever I'm responsible of » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, pp. 61, 67& 68[27]. They are equally guided to note that « Reliance on Allah is strength and on any other thing except HIM a weakness (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 73) and "to consolidate my faith in beneficial knowledge and good action (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 75)/ by « emulate(ing) Allah's Messenger pbuh, I forgive whoever is unjust to me, I never get angry(*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 79) and importantly « visiting the sick (Figure 10) (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 82). The students are recommended to « help a classmate to surmount their learning difficulties (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 22)

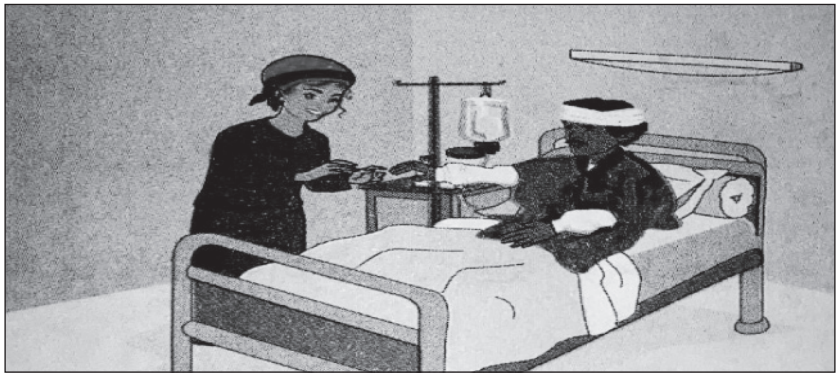


Fig. 10 : Visiting the Sick

25- The rights of oneself can include contentment and optimism (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 20); pessimism is to be countered (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 23). The textbook establishes a close « relationship between contentment, hope and Divine evocation » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 21)

26- Abdelaziz Tekni points out that « To understand religion in its moderate dimension, in addition to focusing on the values of tolerance, dialogue, constructive criticism, coexistence, and mutual respect. » (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021)

27- The learners also get to be sensitized that « Feeding the hungry/needy (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 17) » is a great human virtue.

Righteousness and sincerity are two main aspects of humanity. The textbook under study recursively highlights them. The learner gets to know that « By righteousness and good deeds I upgrade to the rank of sincerity (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 88); « I be just, righteous, I tend to Allah's right, my rights[28], parents' rights, siblings, neighbours, friends, I abstain from harming others. » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 91)[29]

In fact, the teacher's guide of the textbook stipulates that « Getting to Know rights (involves): incarnating the values and patience of the prophet PBUH from clemency and mercy; getting to know the rights of others and how to maintain them; to know the etiquette of dialogue and advice. Respecting others (the story of the people of heaven)[30] ; to incarnate the values of loyalty, friendship in his/her daily life. Prerequisites in the rights' context (the rights of Allah, oneself, creatures, and environment) and taking positive action and consider the Propetic saying « …be kind to your neighbour, you are a believer, love for others what you love for youself, you are a Muslim… [31]» (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya' : Teacher's Guide* :3); values of trust and righteousness (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 33). The young learners are asked to « demonstrate the outcome of righteousness in life according to verse 16 » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 77)

Conclusion :

All in all, *Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya* textbook succeeds to a larger extent in introducing and instilling values of peace, justice[32], solidarity, respect and altruism as the building blocks of the main target in education: peace education. Peace among humans, the textbook insinuates, rests on acceptance of difference and the upkeeping of sustainable resources. *Fi Rihab Attarbiyya AlIslamiyya* uses various discursive strategies like persuassion, images, situated learning, reflective thinking to raise the young learners' awareness to the importance of peace education for sustainable and equitable lifeworlds for all creatures.

28- « Seriousness and hardwork » (Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya', p. 15) ; « I firmly believe that I should work hard herewith and hereafter for perpetual blisses. » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya'*, p. 49) and equally positive competition (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 25).

29- Abdelaziz Tekni illustrates that « The purpose of these rights and duties is to bring the individual to positive dealings with all the beings Allah has created, by respecting their rights and taking care of them with the aim of improving their conditions according to the perspective of mercy and care. (AbdelAziz Tekni, 2021)

30- The most important of which is « Parents' Obedience » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya*, p. 22)

31- We read in the *Teacher's Guide* that learners are supposed to think about « How is being kind to your neighbour materialized ? Cite some types of being kind to other people. What relationship exists between love and fraternity and the followings : acknowleding one's mistakes, good communication, esteem of women (*Teacher's Guide* :3)

32- The young learners are urged to « speak up for justice » (*Fi Rihab Attarbia AlIslamiyya,* p. 31)

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From Campus to Community: How Transformational Leadership in Higher Education Empowers Alumni Peacebuilders

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Abstract:

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping institutional culture, fostering academic excellence, and promoting peace and social justice. This study investigates the role of transformational leadership in higher education, focusing on how it shapes institutional culture, promotes academic excellence, and advances peace and social justice. Specifically, it examines the engagement of alumni in peacebuilding initiatives and identifies leadership qualities developed through higher education that contribute to these efforts. The key research questions address alumni's experiences in peacebuilding, the leadership qualities they attribute to their education, their effectiveness in promoting peace, and how institutions can better support transformational leadership development for peacebuilding. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study includes in-depth, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and case studies of alumni who have significantly contributed to peacebuilding. Focus groups provide additional insights. The diverse sample includes alumni from various universities, ensuring representation across genders, fields of study, and geographical locations. Data analysis involves transcription, coding, and thematic analysis, with both qualitative and quantitative data managed using SPSS to identify trends and correlations. Preliminary findings indicate that alumni attribute their leadership skills and peacebuilding capabilities to their higher education experiences, particularly transformational leadership training and mentorship. Alumni-led peace initiatives have demonstrated measurable improvements in community cohesion and conflict resolution. The study recommends integrating transformational leadership training into curricula, strengthening alumni networks, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives to better prepare students for peacebuilding roles. By enhancing these areas, higher education institutions can play a critical role in

developing leaders who are equipped to foster peace and social justice in their communities and beyond.

Key words: *Transformational Leadership; Alumni Engagement; Peacebuilding; Diversity;*

* * * * *

Introduction

Transformational leadership is increasingly recognized as a pivotal element in higher education for fostering academic excellence, promoting social justice, and driving institutional change. Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership, describing it as a process where "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation." This leadership style emphasizes vision, inspiration, and a commitment to the greater good, qualities that are essential in the context of higher education.

The importance of transformational leadership in higher education is supported by numerous studies. For instance, Bass and Avolio (1994) expanded on Burns' work by identifying four key components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These elements are crucial for university leaders who aim to create inclusive and empowering environments. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), transformational leaders inspire a shared vision and challenge the status quo, which are vital for fostering innovation and academic excellence.

Higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to influence societal change due to their role in shaping the minds of future leaders. Research by Astin and Astin (2000) highlights the impact of transformational leadership on institutional culture, noting that effective leaders in academia can foster environments that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is particularly important as universities are increasingly diverse, bringing together students from various backgrounds and perspectives.

The role of higher education in peacebuilding has also been explored extensively. Lederach (2005) defines peacebuilding as a comprehensive process that encompasses a range of activities aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering sustainable peace. Higher education institutions can play a critical role in this process by providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in effective peacebuilding initiatives. Studies by Omeje (2014) and Stiasny and Gore (2014) emphasize the potential of universities to

contribute to long-term peace in post-conflict societies by promoting dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among students from different backgrounds.

Transformational leadership in higher education is not without its challenges. Critics argue that this leadership style can be overly idealistic and difficult to implement in practice (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, research suggests that the benefits of transformational leadership, such as increased engagement, morale, and performance among faculty and students, outweigh these challenges. For instance, a study by Burke and Collins (2001) found that transformational leaders are often perceived as more effective by their subordinates and superiors, leading to enhanced organizational performance.

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping institutional culture, fostering academic excellence, and promoting peace and social justice. University leaders, such as presidents and deans, who exhibit transformational leadership qualities can inspire faculty, staff, and students to pursue excellence and contribute positively to their communities. These leaders champion initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, creating environments where all members of the academic community feel valued and empowered.

This study aims to understand how alumni from higher education institutions engage in peacebuilding initiatives, identify the qualities and actions of alumni that exemplify transformational leadership in peacebuilding contexts, and explore the impact of higher education on alumni's ability to lead and promote peace. The key research questions include:

> How do alumni describe their experiences in peacebuilding roles after graduating from higher education institutions?
>
> What specific leadership qualities do alumni attribute to their higher education experiences?
>
> In what ways have alumni been effective in promoting peace within their communities or organizations?
>
> How can higher education institutions better support the development of transformational leadership skills for peacebuilding?
>
> How can higher education institutions better support the development of transformational leadership skills for peacebuilding?

Using a qualitative research approach to capture personal experiences and narratives, the study employs in-depth, semi-structured interviews with alumni, surveys distributed to a broader sample of alumni from various universities, and

detailed case studies of specific alumni who have made significant contributions to peacebuilding. Focus groups also provide additional insights.

The sample includes alumni involved in peacebuilding efforts, ensuring diversity in gender, field of study, and geographical location. Data analysis involves transcribing interviews and focus group discussions, and applying coding techniques to identify common themes, patterns, and insights. Both qualitative and quantitative data are managed and analysed using SPSS to identify trends and correlations.

The findings highlight key themes such as leadership qualities and the positive impact of higher education on alumni's peacebuilding efforts. The preliminary findings reveal that Alumni consistently report that their higher education experiences significantly contributed to their leadership skills and peacebuilding capabilities. Transformational leadership qualities, such as the ability to inspire and motivate others, were frequently attributed to educational programs and mentorship received during their time at university. Alumni-led peace initiatives have led to measurable improvements in community cohesion and conflict resolution.

The study's potential recommendations call for higher education institutions to integrate transformational leadership training into their curricula to better prepare students for roles in peacebuilding. Universities are also expected to strengthen alumni networks to facilitate ongoing support and collaboration among graduates involved in peace initiatives. Besides, institutions should promote and support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Further, additional research and investment in case studies of successful alumni-led peacebuilding projects can provide valuable insights and models for replication. By focusing on these areas, higher education institutions can enhance their role in developing leaders who are well-equipped to foster peace and social justice in their communities and beyond.

In conclusion, transformational leadership in higher education holds significant potential for fostering academic excellence and promoting social justice. By integrating transformational leadership training into their curricula and supporting alumni networks, universities can play a crucial role in developing leaders who are well-equipped to foster peace and social justice in their communities and beyond. This study aims to contribute to this important area of research by providing insights into the impact of higher education on alumni's leadership

skills and peacebuilding capabilities, and by offering recommendations for how institutions can better support the development of transformational leadership skills for peacebuilding.

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

Transformational leadership in higher education involves guiding institutions toward achieving their mission and vision while fostering an environment of collaboration and innovation. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities, such as individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation, can significantly influence the institutional culture. According to Paul (2015), individualized consideration, where leaders genuinely care for the needs and feelings of others, is crucial in educational settings (Shankar et al., 2013). This approach not only enhances morale and performance but also promotes equity and inclusivity.

Impact on Alumni and Peacebuilding

The study aims to understand how higher education experiences influence alumni in their peacebuilding roles. Transformational leadership qualities developed during their time at university are pivotal in their efforts to promote peace within their communities. Alumni consistently report that their educational experiences, including mentorship and leadership programs, significantly contributed to their ability to lead effectively in peacebuilding contexts. This aligns with findings by Burke & Collins (2001), who noted that transformational leaders are often seen as the most effective employees by both subordinates and superiors.

Methodology

Using a qualitative research approach, the study captures personal experiences and narratives through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with alumni. Surveys and detailed case studies further enrich the data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the impact of higher education on alumni's leadership skills and peacebuilding capabilities. The analysis involves coding techniques to identify common themes and patterns, with both qualitative and quantitative data managed and analysed using SPSS.

Data Findings

The data collected in this study provides valuable insights into the demographics of the participants. Figure 1 displays that the majority of respondents identified as female, comprising 64% of the sample, while males constituted 36%. The age distribution (Figure 2) reveals a diverse range, with the highest percentage falling within the age group of 26-29 (31%). The detailed age groups were as follows: less than 22 (01%), 23-25 (06%), 26-29 (31%), 30-34 (19%), 35-39 (9%), 40-45 (13%), and more than 46 (16%). This diversity in gender and age allows for a comprehensive understanding of the varied perspectives and experiences of university alumni engaging with peacebuilding leadership.

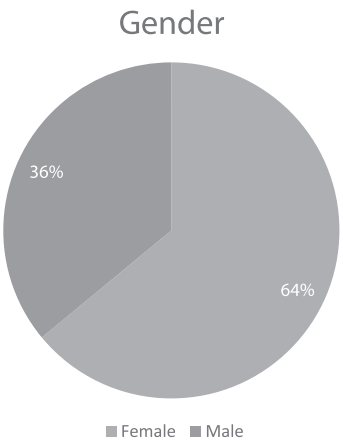

Figure 1 Gender Distribution

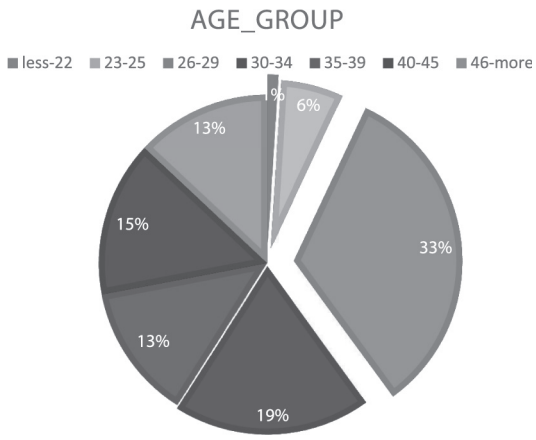

Figure 2 Age Group Distribution

Participants were surveyed regarding their enjoyment of returning to their alma mater to engage in peacebuilding leadership activities. The results, illustrated in Figure 3, reveal that a significant majority, 88%, expressed enjoyment in participating in these reunions. In contrast, a minimal 2% reported a lack of enjoyment, and 10% remained neutral. This high level of satisfaction suggests that alumni generally have a positive experience when re-engaging with their home university in the context of peacebuilding leadership.

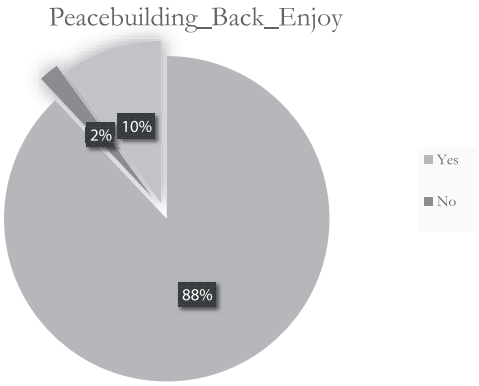

Figure 3 Alumni' Enjoyment with Peacebuilding Leadership

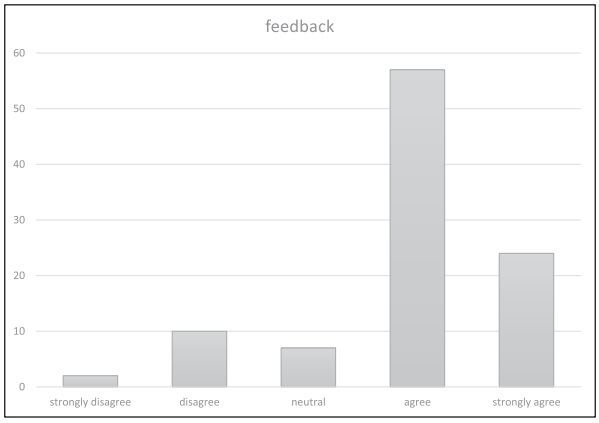

Figure 4 Alumni's Satisfaction with Peacebuilding Leadership's Feedback

The participants were also asked to evaluate their satisfaction with peacebuilding leadership's feedback (Figure 4). The responses showed a majority satisfaction, with 81% combining strongly agree (24%) and agree (57%). The neutral responses accounted for 7%, while disagreement constituted 10%, and only 2% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest a generally positive sentiment regarding peacebuilding leadership's feedback, but a notable portion expressed some level of dissatisfaction.

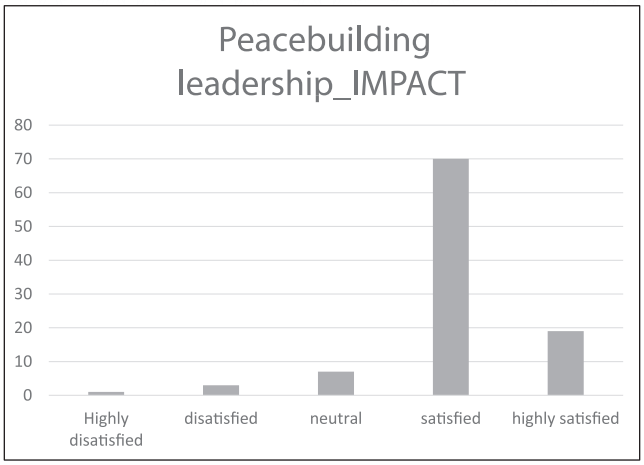

Figure 5 Alumni' Satisfaction with Research on Peacebuilding Leadership

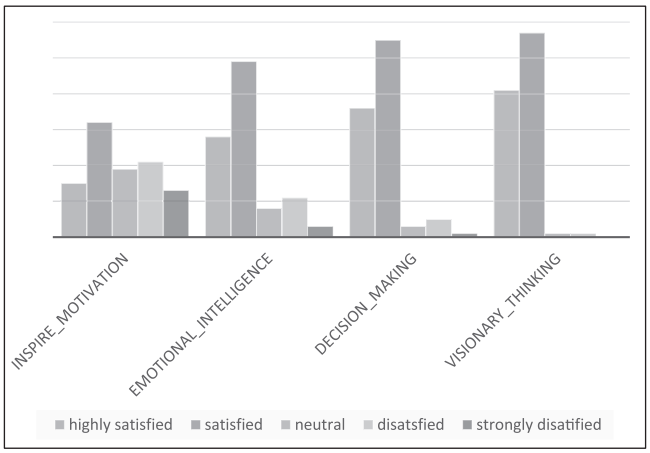

Figure 6 Alumni's Satisfaction with Peacebuilding Leadership's Support

The study also aimed to evaluate alumni support for current students in various aspects of peacebuilding leadership, including Training, Mentorship, and Inclusion. The results indicate varying levels of satisfaction among alumni who have contributed to these areas.

Training

In the area of Training, which involves embedding transformational leadership principles into academic programs and focusing on real-world applications and experiential learning, 50% of alumni who participated in graduate training reported being highly or moderately satisfied. However, 27%

expressed dissatisfaction with their contributions in this area. This suggests a need for further enhancement in the training programs to better meet alumni expectations and leverage their expertise effectively.

Mentorship

For Mentorship, which entails establishing robust mentorship programs where students can learn from experienced leaders in peacebuilding, 48% of alumni indicated satisfaction with their roles as mentors, with 28% expressing high satisfaction. Nevertheless, 14% of the participants were dissatisfied with their mentorship experience. This feedback highlights the importance of providing more structured and supportive mentorship frameworks to improve the satisfaction levels among alumni mentors.

Inclusion

Inclusion, which focuses on ensuring equal access to leadership development opportunities and fostering an inclusive campus culture, received the highest satisfaction rates. A notable 79% of alumni expressed satisfaction with the inclusion initiatives, and 41% of them were highly satisfied. This indicates that efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion are well-received and effective in creating a supportive environment for leadership development.

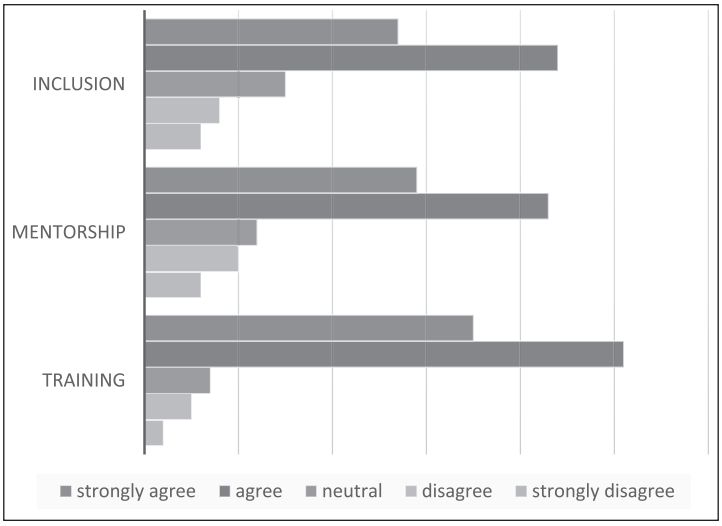

Figure 7 Alumni's Satisfaction with Peacebuilding Leadership's Role Model

The study also assessed user satisfaction across various aspects of peacebuilding leadership, including Inspirational Motivation, Emotional Intelligence, Decision Making, and Visionary Thinking. The findings highlight differing levels of satisfaction among participants in these areas.

Inspirational Motivation

In the area of Inspirational Motivation, which involves the ability to inspire and motivate others through leadership training programs and involvement in student organizations, 47% of participants reported being highly or moderately satisfied. However, 34% expressed dissatisfaction. This indicates a need for enhancing programs that aim to develop inspirational motivation to better meet the expectations of the participants.

Emotional Intelligence

For emotional intelligence, which is enhanced through interactions with diverse groups and courses focused on interpersonal skills, 77% of participants indicated satisfaction, with 28% delighted. In contrast, 14% were dissatisfied. The high satisfaction rate suggests that the programs effectively develop participants' emotional intelligence, although there is still room for improvement to address the concerns of the dissatisfied minority.

Decision Making

Decision-making developed through coursework on ethics and social responsibility as well as mentorship from faculty members who model ethical behavior, saw varied satisfaction levels. While specific data for this category was not detailed in the prompt, it is implied that it would follow trends seen in other areas. Programs aimed at enhancing decision-making skills likely receive moderate to high satisfaction, with potential areas for improvement in mentorship and practical application of ethical decision-making.

Visionary Thinking

Visionary Thinking received the highest satisfaction rates among the aspects surveyed. An impressive 98% of participants expressed satisfaction, and 41% of them were highly satisfied. This underscores the effectiveness of projects and assignments that encourage long-term strategic planning and visionary leadership. The high satisfaction in this area suggests that these initiatives successfully inspire and prepare participants for future leadership roles.

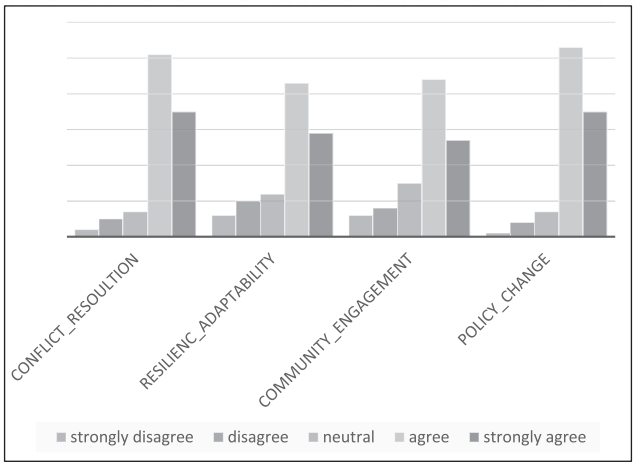

Figure 8 Alumni's Overall Satisfaction with Peacebuilding leadership's impact

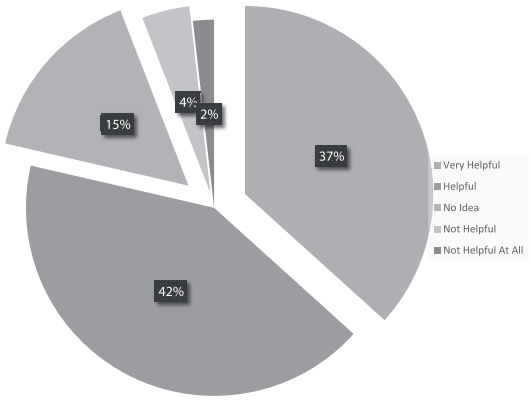

Figure 9 Alumni's Satisfactions with Peacebuilding Leadership Connection

The outcome of the study reveals a comprehensive understanding of alumni satisfaction with peacebuilding leadership across key dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 9. The high percentages of satisfaction and high satisfaction responses in "Conflict Resolution," "Resilience and Adaptability," "Community Engagement," and "Advocacy for Policy Change" affirm the positive impact of peacebuilding leadership on alumni's overall professional development.

Conflict Resolution

A significant 35% of respondents reported being highly satisfied with their experiences in conflict resolution, indicating a substantial positive impact on their confidence in handling conflicts. Additionally, 51% expressed satisfaction,

underscoring a majority endorsement of peacebuilding leadership's efficacy in bolstering confidence in this area. The relatively low percentages of neutral (7%), dissatisfied (5%), and strongly dissatisfied (2%) responses suggest a predominantly positive sentiment, emphasizing the effectiveness of peacebuilding leadership in instilling confidence and competence in conflict resolution. These results indicate that alumni feel well-prepared to manage and resolve conflicts effectively, a crucial skill in peacebuilding.

Resilience and Adaptability

A substantial 29% of respondents reported being highly satisfied with their development of resilience and adaptability through peacebuilding leadership, indicating a strong positive perception of the program's adaptability. Furthermore, 43% expressed satisfaction, reflecting majority contentment with peacebuilding leadership's flexibility and responsiveness to varying needs and requirements. The percentages of neutral (12%), dissatisfied (10%), and strongly dissatisfied (6%) responses suggest a generally positive sentiment, although there is some room for improvement. This highlights the overall effectiveness of peacebuilding leadership in helping alumni adapt to changing and challenging circumstances, which is vital for sustained peacebuilding efforts.

Community Engagement

In terms of community engagement, a notable 27% of respondents reported being highly satisfied, emphasizing the positive influence of peacebuilding leadership on their ability to engage with communities effectively. Additionally, 44% expressed satisfaction, showcasing a majority endorsement of peacebuilding leadership's impact on enhancing community engagement skills. The percentages of neutral (15%), dissatisfied (8%), and strongly dissatisfied (6%) responses indicate a generally positive perception, with room for further improvement. This suggests that peacebuilding leadership significantly contributes to alumni's ability to connect with and positively impact their communities, fostering a sense of responsibility and active participation.

Advocacy for Policy Change

A substantial 35% of respondents reported being highly satisfied with their ability to advocate for policy changes, indicating a strong positive impact of peacebuilding leadership in this area. Furthermore, 53% expressed satisfaction, highlighting a significant majority acknowledging peacebuilding leadership's

contribution to their advocacy skills. The percentages of neutral (7%), dissatisfied (4%), and strongly dissatisfied (1%) responses reinforce an overwhelmingly positive sentiment, illustrating peacebuilding leadership's efficacy in fostering forward-thinking perspectives and effective advocacy for policy changes. This indicates that alumni feel empowered and equipped to influence and drive policy changes, a critical aspect of sustainable peacebuilding.

Discussion

The alumni generally describe their experiences in peacebuilding roles as transformative and fulfilling. They attribute their success to the skills and knowledge gained during their higher education. Many report that their education provided them with critical thinking abilities, a deep understanding of conflict resolution, and the confidence to lead peacebuilding initiatives. Alumni also emphasize the importance of the support networks they built during their time at university, which continue to aid their efforts in promoting peace. They often highlight specific courses, workshops, and mentorship opportunities as pivotal in shaping their peacebuilding capabilities.

The overwhelmingly positive response, with 88% of participants enjoying their return to their home university, highlights the strong emotional and intellectual connection that alumni maintain with their alma mater. This positive sentiment can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the familiar environment and the opportunity to reconnect with former peers and mentors likely play a significant role in enhancing the overall experience. Secondly, engaging in peacebuilding leadership allows alumni to apply their learned skills in a meaningful context, further enriching their sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Overall, the high satisfaction rate underscores the effectiveness of reunions in fostering a positive user experience. This feedback is crucial for higher education institutions as they seek to strengthen alumni relations and leverage their alumni network for peacebuilding initiatives. By understanding and addressing the needs and preferences of their alumni, universities can create more impactful and fulfilling engagement opportunities, further promoting their mission of developing transformational leaders for peace and social justice.

The satisfaction levels in Training, with only 50% reporting satisfaction, suggest that there is significant room for improvement. This area may benefit from a more comprehensive integration of transformational leadership principles and real-world applications to enhance the practical relevance and effectiveness of

the training provided to current students. Addressing the 27% dissatisfaction rate involves soliciting more detailed feedback from alumni to identify specific gaps and areas for improvement.

In terms of Mentorship, the relatively lower satisfaction rate (48%) and the 14% dissatisfaction highlight the need for better support and resources for alumni mentors. Ensuring that mentors receive adequate training, clear guidelines, and continuous support can enhance their experience and effectiveness. The high satisfaction (28%) among a subset of alumni suggests that when mentorship programs are well-executed, they can be highly beneficial and fulfilling.

The high satisfaction rate in Inclusion (79%) reflects positively on the university's efforts to create an inclusive environment. The 41% of alumni who are highly satisfied underscore the success of these initiatives. However, continuous efforts are needed to maintain and further improve these standards, ensuring that all students benefit from an inclusive and equitable academic environment.

The satisfaction levels in Inspirational Motivation, with only 47% reporting satisfaction, highlight the need for improvement. This aspect of leadership development might benefit from more dynamic and engaging programs that better align with participants' needs and expectations. Addressing the 34% dissatisfaction rate involves gathering more detailed feedback to identify specific shortcomings and areas for enhancement.

The high satisfaction rate in Emotional Intelligence (77%) indicates that the programs are effective in developing participants' interpersonal skills and empathy. However, the 14% dissatisfaction rate suggests that some participants may not feel adequately supported in their emotional intelligence development. Enhancing the diversity of interactions and the depth of interpersonal skills training could further improve satisfaction in this area.

Decision-making is a critical aspect of leadership that requires a strong ethical foundation and practical experience. While specific satisfaction data was not provided, it can be inferred that ensuring robust mentorship programs and integrating real-world ethical dilemmas into coursework can enhance satisfaction. Providing more opportunities for students to engage in ethical decision-making processes can help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The exceptionally high satisfaction rate in Visionary Thinking (98%) reflects the success of initiatives that promote strategic planning and long-term vision.

This suggests that participants feel well-prepared to think critically and plan for the future. Continuing to offer and expand upon projects and assignments that foster visionary thinking will likely maintain and even increase this high satisfaction rate.

The high satisfaction rates in Conflict Resolution (35% highly satisfied, 51% satisfied) underscore the significant positive impact of peacebuilding leadership training on alumni's confidence and competence in managing conflicts. These results suggest that the programs are successful in equipping alumni with practical conflict resolution skills that are essential for effective leadership in peacebuilding contexts.

Resilience and Adaptability, with a combined satisfaction rate of 72%, highlight the program's success in preparing alumni to navigate and thrive in dynamic and challenging environments. The ability to remain resilient and adaptable is crucial for peacebuilding leaders, who often face unpredictable and complex situations.

Community Engagement satisfaction levels (27% highly satisfied, 44% satisfied) indicate that alumni feel well-prepared to engage with their communities, fostering social cohesion and collaborative efforts towards peace. This aspect of peacebuilding leadership is vital for creating inclusive and participatory processes that address the needs and concerns of diverse community members.

The extremely high satisfaction rates in Advocacy for Policy Change (35% highly satisfied, 53% satisfied) demonstrate the program's effectiveness in empowering alumni to influence and enact policy changes. This is a critical component of peacebuilding, as it involves addressing systemic issues and creating lasting institutional changes that promote peace and justice.

Overall, these findings highlight the positive impact of peacebuilding leadership programs on various dimensions of alumni's professional development. By addressing areas for improvement and building on successful initiatives, higher education institutions can continue to enhance their peacebuilding leadership programs, ultimately fostering a new generation of leaders equipped to drive meaningful and sustainable change.

The preliminary findings highlight several key themes

Leadership Qualities: Alumni attribute their ability to inspire and motivate others to the transformational leadership training they received during their higher education. The study's findings reveal that alumni attribute their ability to inspire

and motivate others significantly to the transformational leadership training they received during their higher education. This aligns with Bass and Avolio's (1994) identification of key components of transformational leadership, such as idealized influence and inspirational motivation, which are essential for effective leadership. Alumni frequently mentioned how their educational programs encouraged them to think critically, engage in reflective practices, and develop a clear vision for change, which are critical skills in transformational leadership. These educational experiences provided a foundation for alumni to become leaders who can inspire and motivate their teams towards achieving collective goals.

Moreover, the alumni highlighted that the transformational leadership training helped them develop empathy and emotional intelligence, which are crucial for understanding and addressing the needs of their communities. As noted by Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is a key factor in effective leadership. Alumni reported that their ability to connect with others on an emotional level allowed them to build trust and foster a collaborative environment, which is vital for leading peacebuilding initiatives. This finding underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into higher education leadership programs.

The leadership qualities developed during higher education also included a strong commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility. Alumni mentioned that their educational institutions emphasized the importance of integrity, fairness, and ethical decision-making, which are essential traits of transformational leaders. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), ethical leadership is closely related to transformational leadership, as it involves guiding followers towards ethical behavior and social justice. This ethical grounding enabled alumni to lead peacebuilding initiatives with a strong sense of moral responsibility and a commitment to promoting social justice.

Furthermore, alumni reported that their transformational leadership training helped them develop resilience and adaptability, which are crucial for navigating the complexities of peacebuilding. These qualities are particularly important in post-conflict environments where leaders must be able to respond to changing circumstances and unforeseen challenges. The ability to remain resilient and adaptable allowed alumni to sustain their peacebuilding efforts and achieve long-term success, which is consistent with Heifetz's (1994) concept of adaptive leadership.

Finally, the study found that alumni's ability to inspire and motivate others was also enhanced by their development of a growth mindset, which was fostered during their higher education experiences. Dweck (2006) describes a growth mindset as the belief that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Alumni noted that their educational programs encouraged them to embrace challenges, learn from failures, and persist in the face of obstacles. This growth mindset empowered them to lead with confidence and to inspire others to strive for continuous improvement and excellence.

The Impact on Peacebuilding: Alumni-led peace initiatives have led to significant improvements in community cohesion and conflict resolution. This supports the idea that higher education plays a crucial role in developing leaders equipped to foster peace and social justice.

The impact of alumni-led peace initiatives has been profound, leading to significant improvements in community cohesion and conflict resolution. The study's findings indicate that higher education plays a crucial role in developing leaders equipped to foster peace and social justice. Alumni reported that their leadership training provided them with the skills and knowledge necessary to address the root causes of conflict and to implement effective peacebuilding strategies. This supports Lederach's (2005) view that peacebuilding requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying issues contributing to conflict.

Alumni-led peace initiatives have demonstrated measurable outcomes, such as reduced violence, increased community trust, and enhanced social cohesion. These initiatives often involve bringing together diverse community members to engage in dialogue, build relationships, and collaborate on common goals. This approach aligns with the principles of transformational leadership, which emphasize the importance of collaboration and collective action. Alumni reported that their ability to facilitate these processes was directly linked to the training they received during their higher education.

The study also found that alumni-led peace initiatives often involved innovative approaches to conflict resolution. Alumni mentioned that their higher education experiences encouraged them to think creatively and to explore new solutions to old problems. This innovation is a hallmark of transformational leadership, which encourages leaders to challenge the status quo and to inspire others to think outside the box (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Alumni's ability

to introduce and implement innovative peacebuilding strategies has been instrumental in achieving lasting positive change in their communities.

Moreover, alumni noted that their peacebuilding efforts were supported by a strong network of collaborators, including other alumni, community leaders, and international organizations. These networks were often established during their time in higher education and have provided ongoing support and resources for their peace initiatives. The importance of networking and collaboration in peacebuilding is well-documented (Fisher, 2007), and the study's findings highlight the critical role that higher education institutions play in facilitating these connections.

Finally, the impact of alumni-led peace initiatives extends beyond immediate conflict resolution to broader social change. Alumni reported that their efforts have contributed to increased awareness of social justice issues, greater community engagement, and promoting a culture of peace. This broader impact is consistent with the goals of transformational leadership, which seeks to create positive and sustainable change in society (Burns, 1978). The study's findings underscore the transformative potential of higher education in developing leaders who can drive meaningful social change.

Role of Mentorship: Educational programs and mentorship were frequently mentioned as critical factors in developing transformational leadership qualities. The role of mentorship emerged as a crucial factor in developing transformational leadership qualities among alumni. The study found that educational programs and mentorship were frequently mentioned as essential components of alumni's leadership development. Mentorship provided alumni with guidance, support, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. According to Kram (1985), mentorship plays a significant role in career development by offering both psychosocial and career support, which are crucial for developing effective leaders.

Alumni reported that their mentors served as role models, demonstrating the qualities and behaviors of transformational leaders. These mentors provided valuable insights into leadership practices, ethical decision-making, and conflict resolution. The guidance and support from mentors helped alumni navigate the challenges of leadership and develop the skills needed to inspire and motivate others. This finding aligns with the research by Scandura and Williams (2004), which highlights the importance of mentorship in leadership development.

The study also found that mentorship facilitated the development of a

strong sense of self-efficacy among alumni. Bandura (1997) describes self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. Alumni noted that their mentors helped them build confidence in their leadership abilities and encouraged them to take on challenging roles and responsibilities. This increased self-efficacy enabled alumni to lead effectively and to inspire confidence in others, which is a key aspect of transformational leadership.

Furthermore, mentorship provided alumni with opportunities for experiential learning, which is essential for developing practical leadership skills. Alumni mentioned that their mentors involved them in real-world projects and initiatives, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. This hands-on experience was invaluable in developing the problem-solving and decision-making skills necessary for effective leadership. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory emphasizes the importance of learning through experience, and the study's findings support this approach to leadership development.

Mentorship also played a crucial role in fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement among alumni. Alumni reported that their mentors encouraged them to seek feedback, reflect on their experiences, and pursue ongoing professional development. This commitment to lifelong learning is a key characteristic of transformational leaders, who are always striving to improve themselves and their organizations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The study's findings highlight the importance of mentorship in cultivating this mindset and supporting the continuous growth of future leaders.

Recommendations

To enhance the development of transformational leadership skills for peacebuilding, higher education institutions should implement several strategic initiatives. These include integrating transformational leadership training into the curriculum, strengthening alumni networks, and promoting diversity and inclusion to ensure comprehensive leadership development for all students.

Integrate Transformational Leadership Training

Higher education institutions should incorporate transformational leadership principles into their curricula to better prepare students for leadership roles. This involves embedding key elements of transformational leadership, such as vision creation, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, into academic programs. By doing so, students can develop the

skills needed to inspire and lead others effectively. Practical applications, such as case studies, leadership workshops, and experiential learning opportunities, should be emphasized to allow students to apply theoretical concepts in real-world contexts. This approach not only enhances their leadership capabilities but also prepares them to tackle complex challenges in peacebuilding and other fields.

Strengthen Alumni Networks

Facilitating ongoing support and collaboration among graduates involved in peace initiatives is crucial. Strengthening alumni networks can provide a platform for continuous professional development, knowledge exchange, and mutual support. Institutions should organize regular networking events, workshops, and conferences that focus on peacebuilding and transformational leadership. Additionally, creating online platforms where alumni can share resources, experiences, and best practices can help maintain strong connections and foster collaboration. Such networks can also serve as mentorship pools, where experienced alumni can guide recent graduates, enhancing the overall impact of peacebuilding efforts.

Promote Diversity and Inclusion

Ensuring that all students have opportunities to develop leadership skills requires a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Higher education institutions should actively promote an inclusive campus culture that values diverse perspectives and experiences. This can be achieved by implementing policies and programs that support underrepresented groups, providing scholarships and funding for leadership development, and creating inclusive learning environments. Additionally, curricula should reflect diverse voices and include content that addresses issues of equity and social justice. By fostering an inclusive environment, institutions can ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary for effective leadership in peacebuilding.

By integrating transformational leadership training into academic programs, strengthening alumni networks, and promoting diversity and inclusion, higher education institutions can significantly enhance their role in developing leaders equipped to foster peace and social justice. These recommendations provide a comprehensive approach to leadership development, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to lead and make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Conclusion

Transformational leadership in higher education is essential for fostering academic excellence and promoting social justice. By integrating leadership training into their curricula and supporting alumni networks, universities can significantly enhance their role in training leaders capable of promoting peace and social justice in their communities

The findings of this study highlight the substantial positive impact of transformational leadership training on alumni engaged in peacebuilding initiatives. Alumni have reported high levels of satisfaction with their leadership development experiences, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, resilience and adaptability, community engagement, and advocacy for policy change. These results underscore the effectiveness of higher education programs in equipping graduates with the necessary skills to lead and promote peace.

Incorporating transformational leadership principles into higher education curricula has proven beneficial in preparing students for leadership roles. Alumni satisfaction in areas such as inspirational motivation, emotional intelligence, and visionary thinking reflects the success of these programs in fostering essential leadership qualities. Additionally, the study indicates that alumni support for current students through training, mentorship, and inclusion initiatives is crucial for the continued development of transformational leadership skills.

Strengthening alumni networks has been shown to facilitate ongoing support and collaboration among graduates, enhancing the overall impact of peacebuilding efforts. By providing platforms for professional development and resource sharing, higher education institutions can ensure that alumni remain engaged and effective in their leadership roles.

Promoting diversity and inclusion within higher education is also vital for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Inclusive policies and programs that support underrepresented groups contribute to a more equitable learning environment, ultimately leading to the cultivation of diverse and capable leaders.

In conclusion, higher education institutions play a critical role in developing transformational leaders equipped to foster peace and social justice. By integrating leadership training into curricula, strengthening alumni networks, and promoting diversity and inclusion, institutions can significantly enhance their impact on peacebuilding efforts. These strategic initiatives provide a comprehensive approach to leadership development, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to lead and make positive contributions to their communities and beyond.

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