Peace Education: An exploratory assessment of Lebanese university students' attitudes using Focus Group approach

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Abstract

Lebanon, a Middle Eastern country, has suffered and survived a three-decade series of devastating events, including a civil war, and continuous aggressions, invasions and occupations. Children of the first two decades of wars have become parents. They have rarely enjoyed peaceful lives and have never been exposed to any peace education to enable them to transfer the concept of peace to the following generations. The aforementioned situation has drawn attention to the need of introducing peace education to influence and encourage peaceful approaches to living and surviving in an unstable Lebanon. The current paper aims to explore and assess university students' attitudes toward peace and peace education in the Lebanese school system. Data collected is to be used as a basis for further exploration in the field of peace education.

Keywords: *Lebanon, Peace, Peace Education, Focus Groups.*

Definition of Peace Education
The UN Declaration clearly acknowledges the potential role of education in promoting peace at an inter-group, national, and international level. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (UN.org, n.d.).

Researchers define peace education differently, depending on the aspired aim. Fountain (1999) defined peace education as "the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural: to resolve conflict peacefully, and to create the conditions conducive to peace whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level" (p. 1).

Johan Galtung, in an interview with Natascha Batic of the UNESCO Courier, describes the main focus of peace education is "to enable and empower people to handle conflicts more creatively and less violently. This is what I mean by peace education, and a lot of knowledge and skills, theory and practice are required for it" (Galtung, 1997:1). While, Reardon (1999) as quoted by Mirra, defines peace education as being "the transmission of knowledge about requirements of the obstacles to and possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace, training in skills for interpreting the knowledge, and the development of reflective and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge to overcoming problems and achieving possibilities" (Mirra, 2008:24).

Aweiss (2001) contends that peace education, as applied in existing projects in the Middle East (specifically in Palestine and Israel), focused on introducing and enhancing factual knowledge of the principles of democracy, human rights and civil society, in addition to the skills of cooperative work, peer mediation, constructive conflict resolution, and interpersonal and social communication skills (pp. 42-43). Quisumbing (2004) confirms Aweiss's views by defining education for peace as "the study of the holistic

concept of peace, understanding the roots of peace and violence, learning the principles of educating for peace, and valuing and promoting human rights, attitudes and behaviors for living together in peace and harmony" (p. 227). "Only in peace and through peace can respect for human dignity and its inalienable rights be guaranteed." Thus spoke His Holiness John Paul II during the celebration of the World Day of Peace on January 1, 2000 (Pope John Paul II, 2000, Para. 3).

Pope John Paul II (2000) added, "beyond legal and institutional considerations, there remains a fundamental duty for all men and women of good will, called to commit themselves personally to the cause of peace: that of educating for peace, setting in place structures of peace and methods of non-violence, and making every possible effort to bring parties in conflict to the negotiating table (Para. 12).

The aforementioned definitions validate the concept that peace education can be regarded as an umbrella term that encompasses different educational programs aimed at promoting issues of equality and social justice, and providing a consistent framework of this broad understanding of peace education which allows its application to the range of political contexts that characterize societies. The integration effect is well defined in The Hague Appeal for Peace (2005) which contends that "peace education is a participatory holistic process" (Para. 1). However, special attention should be directed to customized peace education programs so as to respond to special needs in countries with record of civil wars or national conflicts, for example Lebanon. The younger generations of such countries should have customized peace education programs that would help build the concept of peace, and at the same time help these generations cope with the outcomes present in their respective countries. Diaz-Soto (2005) believes that young children are now exposed to a world where war and conflict are every day occurrences. Therefore, the need for greater understanding about how to address these challenges is crucial in order to establish peaceful solutions.

Lebanon and Peace Education
The need for peace education is articulated in the Hague Agenda for peace and justice for the 21st century (2000) through its Global Campaign for Peace Education.

"A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by the standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other; such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace" (p. 6).

Bretherton, Weston and Zbar (2005) believe that peace pedagogy emphasizes the role of the peace educator as one who works with students to develop a more positive and elaborate concept of peace, starting from the most obvious manifestation, the absence of war, through an appreciation of less-visible forms of violence—such as structural inequalities—to an understanding of the conditions which build positive peace (p. 357). According to Ghosn (2005), the rationale for bringing peace education into the classroom is based on the general aims of education. Educational aims expressed in most national curricula include references to developing in learners rational and critical thinking, tolerance and respect for others, and skills of citizenship in the nation and the wider world. The New Framework for education in Lebanon (1995), for example, includes the goals of learning responsibility, moral and ethical commitment, and of developing cultural openness, critical thinking, intercultural understanding and appreciation, and ability to work with others. Such goals are clearly aligned with the aims of peace education.

Education and Plurality in Lebanon
According to Fares (2001), plurality in Lebanon is manifested as follows:
> "Lebanon, though small, is extremely diverse. There are Christians and Muslims in almost equal numbers. But Christians and Muslims differentiate in many divisions and subdivisions each of which insists on its uniqueness. There are more than a dozen political parties, reflecting the

diversities in Lebanese society. This is an important feature in a region known for the one party regime or for regimes of no parties at all". Moreover, Williams and Azzam (2009) believe that "Lebanon is the perfect place to *Embrace Diversity,* given the plurality of faiths, origins, and languages. The expression of this plurality in political terms has not been easy, but any Lebanese will tell how they cherish such rich diversity and how it makes Lebanon unique. This pluralism has also found expression in Lebanon's long-time commitment to human rights" (Para. 3).

Lebanon is a country that is inhibited by 18 different religious-ethnic groups officially recognized by the present Lebanese Constitution. It is estimated that the Christian population makes up about 36% of the total population; the Moslem population is estimated at 63%, and other religions account for approximately 1.0% of the population (Tayyar.org, 2007). These groups are the main players in Lebanon's complex sectarian politics. According to Daher (1999), "both, Christian and Moslem communities have their share of influence and play their role in the social, educational, administrative, economic and political life of the country". Sectarian coalitions and friendships are built at all social levels in Lebanon. It's worth noting here that Lebanon is an example of a real federation of communities in the world."

Critical Peace Education
According to Bajaj (2008:2), the 1970s marked the turn towards a "critical peace education" advanced by scholars such as Wulf (1974) who noted:

> *[Critical peace education] stems from an explicit understanding of peace education as a criticism of society. … Central concepts of critical peace education [are] "structural violence," "organized peacelessness," and "participation,"… give[ing] an impression of the interdependence of international and internal social structures of power and dependence in and outside school* (Wulf, 1974, quoted in Bajaj, 2008, Para. 9).

Acknowledging the need for a critical approach to peace education that affirms diversity and multiplicity of perspectives, it is important to outline the components of such an approach. While human rights principles often guide peace education research and initiatives, the debates about these universal principles in addition to the promise they hold for sustainable peace are integral to a renewed critical peace education approach (Bajaj, 2008: 3). As for Lebanon, past conflicts and civil strife have created deep rooted emotions and feelings of unrest that continue to surface now and then when the conditions governing multiculturalism are at stake, adding to the conflict and violence. Meanwhile, whenever anniversaries of the civil strife approach, people from all nominations and religions call each other in to shout "never again".

According to Bajaj (2008), post-conflict education often chants the mantra of 'never again' with a silent 'for our people' added on to the end of the phrase. Critical peace educators must engage in the serious reflective and historicized work of engaging individuals and communities in believing and acting towards 'never again for *any* people' so that 'victims' don't become 'killers' as seen historically in many international contexts (Mamdani, 2002). As such, peace education must prioritize even-handedness in its treatment of perpetrators and victims of human rights violations as targets of peace education. Critical peace educators, rather than downloading a pre-set lesson plan from the internet, need local, historicized knowledge to inform strategies to revise textbooks, promote respect for differences through the media and popular culture, and engage in a comprehensive campaign for human rights and social justice.

What to include in peace education initiatives?
According to Galtung (1997), several issues should be taken into consideration when an educational program in peace education is to be designed. Example 1 shows Galtung's recommendations.

Example 1 Excerpts from Galtung's peace education initiatives

> 1. Three notions can be taught dialectically, with their negations--direct peace, structural peace, cultural peace.
> 2. Theoretical work has to be combined with case studies and practice, but students should only go into the field when they are ready.
> 3. I would prefer people to be empowered for self-intervention rather than some managerial top-down intervention by others. Positive intervention should be creative, non-violent and empathic. People should know how to do it.
> 4. Social change is necessary when the basic needs of human life and life in general have been insulted or there is a threat thereof, and when this is a structural/cultural process. We need human rights, the whole repertory of the International Bill of Human Rights, to intervene at the bottom of societies and protect minorities. The problem is that so far we have only heard from the West; we also need the contributions of other civilizations.
> 5. Social change arises from natural, spontaneous movement; sometimes it is very deliberate. Sometimes it is nonviolent, sometimes violent. I believe in deliberate change to reduce *dukkha* (suffering) and bring about *sukha* (happiness, enlightenment) as a Buddhist would say. It does not come by itself. Working for this is itself *sukha.*
> 6. If social goods like education and money are reasonably distributed, then communication will follow to facilitate peace education.

Source: Galtung, Johan (January 1997).

The need for adjustment in the national peace education curriculum should include Galtung's recommendations with discernment in order to acquaint students with the basic theories of peace using a pedagogical approach that suits the Lebanese culture and experiences. Multimedia tools are to accompany lectures to offer first hand examples of historical incidents and case studies; thus, providing the opportunity for critical analysis.

Research Methodology: Ethnography and Focus Group Approach

Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2005) contend that qualitative research is a type of scientific research which seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (p.1). To acquire the aforementioned information, two methodologies are used in the current research namely, ethnographic research and focus groups. However, both approaches are implemented so as to collect the sought after information.

Coffey (1999), in her research on ethnography, insists on the "multiple relationships between the researcher self, the field and the people of the field' (p. 8). Her approach attempts to show that 'fieldwork is personal, emotional and identity work' (p. 1). Moreover, Bell (1999), in her intent to summarize four ethnographic texts, found that ethnographic research acts as a means of 'taking the role of the other' in order to interpret subjects' locally held cultural meaning. Further, she defines the business of applied social research as an active process, whereby accounts are produced through selective observation and interpretation. However, for even the novice researcher, this is an important part of understanding what it is to *do* ethnography since it implies understanding of ethnography, not just as a method, or a methodology, but also as a perspective which, through cultural analysis, enables a particular type of qualitative understanding to be generated (p. 329).

Within the current study, focus groups constitute the second method that is used to create a complete picture of how a given issue affects a community of people. According to Mack et al (2005), "focus groups contribute to this broad understanding by providing well-grounded data on social and cultural

norms, the pervasiveness of these norms within the community, and people's opinions about their own values" (p. 52).

The current exploratory research builds on the strength of qualitative research because of its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue, in this case, peace education. According to Mack et al (2005), "qualitative research provides information about contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (p. 1). Moreover, qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. When used along with quantitative methods, qualitative research can help the researchers to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data." (p. 2)

2. Research Methodology and Instruments

What students should know about peace, and how peace education shapes their knowledge and moral perceptions are the main focus in this paper. It also examines the shortcomings of current university students' peace education, and recommends some major changes that need to be introduced to universities' curricula.

This paper is an exploratory study to assess awareness, response, attitude and willingness to peace applications by a selected group of students from several Lebanese universities. It investigates the extent to which these students are aware of the presence of the peace concept and its implementation in the educational context.

The research was carried out during two periods. The first session was during the Spring Semester 2009-2010, a period that extended from February 2010 to mid June, 2010. The second session was during the Spring Semester 2010-2011, a period that extended from February 2011 to mid April 2011. The research instruments used were focus groups. 24 students participated in four focus groups. The participants are registered in one of the following universities: American University of Science and Technology (AUST), University of Holy Spirit Kaslik (Kaslik), Lebanese American University (LAU), and the Arts, Sciences, and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL).

This study, one of a two-stage exercise was carried out to finalize a formal questionnaire to be used in the second stage of the current research. Gaps pertaining to the content of peace education are to be assessed as gleaned from what the researcher intended to explore and the existing concepts manifested by the focus groups' participants. The first stage of the current research uses four focus groups consisting of six students each to assess their underlying attitudes, opinions, and behavior patterns as related to peace and peace education, and to build an in-depth understanding of the knowledge and types of questions needed to make solid peace education decisions. The second stage of the research (ongoing) relies on a survey which targets selected students, and shall be conducted to assess their views.

The goal of the focus groups was to rely on the existing students' knowledge to identify a potential list of statements and concepts that could be incorporated into the design of the survey questionnaire, and, subsequently leading to the founding of an appropriate peace education curriculum.

Participants in the focus groups were selected from a conveniently identified pool of students who are pursuing their bachelor and master degrees in different Lebanese universities. All students had previously indicated their interest in participating in such an exercise. The focus group students belonged to different academic levels:
- Sophomore

- Junior
- Masters

The group facilitator was the researcher who herself is a university instructor and at the same time a student pursuing her doctorate degree. She is actively involved in the subcommittee for curriculum development at the university she is enrolled at, with over six years of experience in academia.

Each testing session lasted for approximately 1.5 hours on AUL university premises. The focus groups sessions consisted of brainstorming subjects concerning peace, peace education, teaching peace in schools, culture, and peace citizenship. Participants freely expressed their ideas and constructive criticism with absolutely no intervention from the researcher. The researcher summarized the main ideas that were supported by the majority of the participants.

Research Instruments
Structured set of questions emanating from the literature review and the researcher's experience in teaching in several academic institutions has been formalized. The structured questions were used in the four focus groups' sessions. The inherent expectation, as gleaned from the focus groups' results, was to construct a formal survey questionnaire that is used in the second stage of the research (ongoing). A sample of the intended set of questions is found at the end of this paper.

3. Results and Findings

Results obtained from the focus groups are useful to explore new territory, of which little is known beforehand, and as manifested by The Health Communication Unit (2002) are considered valuable as a precursor to the development of a questionnaire and methodology for quantitative research (learn people's language, determine best response categories, explore parameters of an issue) (p. 6). The researcher concurs with the aforementioned statements, because such findings provide a unique insight into existing beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes toward peace and peace education themes. Analysis of the data will follow Lederman's (1989) approach where transcripts are summarized based on a coding scheme for interpreting focus group data. As she suggested "I: individual / idiosyncratic (including statements that are only mentioned once or the thoughts of one individual), C: consensus (statements contain those that represent agreement among the members), and A: areas of agreement / disagreement (statements contain those which either agree or disagree)" (p. 235). Qualitative results are shown in Examples 2 to 7.

Example 2 Focus groups' main outcomes 1

Focus Group One
On Peace:
    I-Statements:
- Living in a world without contention.
- Living by God's rules and not our ways
- Peace of mind and conscious

    C-Statements:
- Mutual respect, respect of law and order
- Co-existence, mutual respect, and mutual acceptance
- Harmony

    A-Statements:
- Presence of overwhelming justice over the globe
- No war among groups/countries

On Peace Education:

    I-Statements:
- Teaching justice and human rights
- Teaching theoretical and practical causes of peace
- Teaching peaceful behavior

    C-Statements:
- Teaching coexistence and mutual respect of opinions
- Teaching respect

    A-Statements:
- Teaching beauty of peaceful life, love, understanding and awareness

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Example 3 Focus groups' main outcomes 2

Focus Group Two

On Peace:

    I-Statements:
- Quality of life
- Mutual respect
- All religions call for peace and harmony

    C-Statements:
- Mutual coexistence, living without fear
- Living in harmony

    A-Statements:
- There is no such thing as peace! Peace is related to politics
- Peace is human soul and mind which control attitude

On Peace Education:

    I-Statements:
- Teaching the science of peace
- Teaching human enlightenment, understanding, no fear or hate

    C-Statements:
- Teaching elements of peace
- Teaching love and avoidance of conflict
- Education away from politics

    A-Statements:
- Teaching restraining and controlling of attitudes and thoughts

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Example 4 Focus groups' main outcomes 3

Focus Group One

Resultant Culture from Peace Education

    I-Statements:
- Culture of justice and fairness
- Culture that defends the Lebanese resistance is a culture of peace

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- Culture of respect

C-Statements:
- Culture of love
- Culture of believers in peace
- Culture of peace

Focus Group Two
Resultant Culture from Peace Education
    I-Statements:
- Culture of devotion
- Culture of peace
- An open culture for respect and love
- Culture of development and achievements

C-Statements:
- Culture of mutual understanding
- Culture of understanding of peace values

Example 5 Focus groups' main outcomes 4

Focus Group One
Schools Teach Peace? If yes, What will the outcome be?
    I-Statements:
- Few in Lebanon. But if so, no considerable results.
- Some schools. Those who teach should not concentrate on stopping war but preserving the rights of the oppressed. Outcome is war!

C-Statements:
- Many schools teach religion. All religions call for peace and love.
- Culture of development and achievements

A-Statements:
- No. If so, it will have a role in getting to peace. Also, family and society need to have a role.
- Have not seen such. However, yes, in religious schools, but in a limited scope.

Focus Group Two
Schools Teach Peace? If yes, What will the outcome be?
    I-Statements:
- Schools teach peace; however, surrounding's atmosphere is not.
- Some. However, if all schools do, future generations will have better social standards and fewer conflicts.
- Some. Leads to a better society that tolerates differences.

C-Statements:
- Very few. Contribution to a peaceful world.

A-Statements:
- No idea. But if so, achieving peace.
- No!

Example 6 Focus groups' main outcomes 5

Focus Group One

Can schools be instrumental in enhancing the possibilities of peaceful coexistence in the future?

   I-Statements:
- Yes. But should start from the students' early ages.
- No comment.

   C-Statements:
- Yes. However, other institutions should be part of it.
- Yes. Ensures peaceful coexistence.

   A-Statements:
- No. Because of politics.
- Yes. But limited results because of time factor. Family and society are more effective.

Focus Group Two

Can schools be instrumental in enhancing the possibilities of peaceful coexistence in the future?

   I-Statements:
- Yes. Preparing good citizens

   C-Statements:
- Yes. Preparing good citizens of the society.
- Yes. Building children's background on peace and love.

   A-Statements:
- No.
- Yes.
- Yes, but family has a major role.

Example 7 Focus groups main outcomes 6

Focus Group One

How do you foresee the future of peace in the world?

   I-Statements:
- Does not exist. Because of ineffective humans ruling.
- Does not exist.
- No comment.

   C-Statements:
- So far, no peace.
- No peace. There are continuous conflicts.

   A-Statements:
- Having people who benefit of war does not lead to peace.
- World peace is contaminated and there are double standards.

Focus Group Two

How do you foresee the future of peace in the world?

   I-Statements:
- Does not exist. Needs global foundations.

- I am an optimist.

  C-Statements:
  - So far, no peace.
  - More difficult than ever.

  A-Statements:
  - In trouble. Wars should be stopped in the Middle East (Iraq, Palestine).
  - Americans should stop intervening and should not get involved.

Demographics

Table 1 shows that the gender distribution is disproportional, though it reflects actual classroom population; results indicate that the percentage of males is higher than that of females: 62% versus 38%. 65% of the respondents are mainly in the age range between 17 and 25 years old, while 22.5% are between 26 and 31. As for education, 48.8% of the respondents are continuing their bachelor degree: 17.1% are seniors, 6.1% are juniors, and 25.6% are sophomores. Moreover, 47.6% are graduate students pursuing their MA/MBA/MS degrees and 3.6% hold a doctorate degree. 64% of the respondents live in Beirut, 5.5% live in Mount Lebanon, 12.2% live in the South, and 18.3% live in the Bekaa Valley, East of Lebanon.

The majority of the participants (98.2%) are Lebanese, 0.6% is Syrian, and 1.2% is Arabs. Respondents were distributed among four universities in Lebanon: 54.3% were from the American University of Science and Technology (AUST), 18.3% were from the University of the Holy Spirit (Kaslik), 6.7% were from the Lebanese American University (LAU), and 20.7% were from the Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL). Most of the participants are old enough to make personal judgments, which could have been formed before coming to the university or are getting shaped through their years of education. These two demographic results are essential for the analysis in this study.

Table 1 Demographics

Trait	%	Trait	%
Gender		**Location**	
Female	37.8	Beirut	64.0
Male	62.2	Mount Lebanon	5.5
		South	12.2
Age		Bekaa	18.3
17-19	9.8	North	0.0
20-22	23.2		
23-25	32.9	**Country**	
26-28	15.2	Lebanon	98.2
29-31	7.3	Syria	.6
32-34	3.7	Other Arab Country	1.2
35-37	1.8	Other Non-Arab Country	0.0
38-40	4.3		
47-49	1.2	**University**	
50 and Above	0.6	AUST	
		Kaslik	54.3
Education: Academic Standing		LAU	18.3
Sophomore	25.6	AUL	6.7
Junior	6.1		20.7
Senior	17.1		

Graduate MA-MBA-MS	47.6		
Doctorate DBA-PhD	3.7		

Results obtained from the focus groups are presented below. This section includes six questions whose purpose is to assess the participants' knowledge about peace and peace education.

Peace Literacy and Attitude

Examples 2 and 3 show that the grand majority of the respondents believe that peace can make a difference in the world. However, some respondents do not agree that peace exists because of political intervention and the individual agendas of some nations. When the respondents were asked about the term "peace education", the majority provided several statements to describe the issue with reference to the structure in their programs of studies. Moreover, the majority of the respondent students believe that peace can be taught in schools; some believe that no schools in Lebanon are teaching about peace; and almost all are willing to support the teaching peace initiative in schools.

The aforementioned results reflect that the majority of the university students believe that peace can make a difference in the world, though they do not totally agree on what peace education is. However, the students showed willingness and interest in learning and supporting peace education if taught at schools. Consequently, this fact adds value to the next stage of the research that is surveying students who base their attitude around peace statements on positive and firm understanding of the value that peace will bring to the world.

Perceptions of Peace

Asking the participants about peace as a concept that forms a basis on which to assess and understand the respondents' perceptions (Table 2).

Table 2 Perceptions toward peace

Statement
Peace is living with others safely
Peace is living in mutual respect
Peace is living with others with no wars
Peace is coexistence and harmony
Peace is following the word of God in all religions
Peace has no place where conflict exists
Peace, there is no such concept today

One may categorize the responses to the statements to which the respondents were exposed to into two categories. The first category assesses the respondents' understanding of the concept of peace, and the second category assesses the respondents' attitude toward peace as a practice. Table 2 shows, within category one that the respondents define peace as living with others safely; that peace is following the word of God in all religions; that peace exists if people follow their religious teaching because all religions call for peace and love.

The first category reflects that respondents identified peace as safety, as the word of God, as an act of faith, as stability, and as quality of life manifested via the economic wellbeing.

Category two of the responses are related to understanding of the practice of peace and are manifested in Table 2 as follows: the respondents manifested that harmony among members of one community is not necessarily peace; and, they agreed that peace has no place where conflict exists. However, respondents believe that there is no such concept today; they also believe that people politicize peace.

Bajaj (2008:4), in her research about critical peace education, sheds light on the notion that special attention to local examples should be included to inspire collective action towards greater equity and justice.

Perceptions of Peace Education

The fourth section of the focus groups addresses questions related to formal peace education. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3 Perceptions toward peace education

Statement
Peace can be taught in schools
Peace education is teaching conflict resolution
Peace education is about teaching tolerance
Peace education only exists in developed countries
Countries that have undergone war can not teach Peace through education in schools
Peace can be taught based on religious values

Table 3 displays two sets of responses: the first set deals with statements concerning peace education in schools, and the second set assesses what to teach. The respondents believe that peace can be taught in schools, that is, during the first steps of educating the new generations of youngsters. Moreover, they disagreed about the statement that states that countries that have undergone war can not teach peace through education in schools. This second result enforces the first statement with a more specific emphasis on Lebanon that had undergone many years of different wars.

The second set of assessed statements shows that the respondents disagreed that peace education is teaching only conflict resolution, but agreed that peace education is teaching tolerance.

Galtung (1997) proposed many recommendations to include in a peace education program (mentioned in Example 1 of this paper). The aforementioned results fit with Galtung's recommendations in that direct peace (Lebanese feel that there is such notion as peace), structural peace (Lebanese feel that there is a direct relationship between peace and politics within a country), and cultural peace (teaching tolerance, love and harmony after suffering a series of conflicts and wars) are basic elements in a peace-education curriculum. Furthermore, a Lebanese peace-education curriculum should include case studies (lessons form previous local conflicts); positive intervention techniques based on observed social networks which were active during several Lebanese – Israeli wars and confrontations; social change is necessary when the basic needs of human life and life in general have been insulted (use of double standards by the international community in Lebanon; a fact that created negative feelings towards peace); finally, social change should be instilled in Lebanon based on the respondents' attitude towards peace (they believe in peace in developing countries; they are ready for coexistence and compromising based on empathetic feelings and preparedness based on religious values).

All the aforementioned results show that when Lebanese respondents in particular, and the population in general, believe that peace can be taught in schools and when they show willingness to support peace education as well, then the overall belief that peace can make a difference is enhanced; a fact that may impact positively any national effort toward peace education. However, one must be cautious about the variables that showed negative effect when stating that peace can make a difference in world peace—for example, the acquaintance with peace education, politicizing peace, and the role of those nations that underwent war or are still at war.

4. **Conclusion and Implications**

Several insights may be drawn from this study. First, in relation to answering the question "can peace be taught", referring to Table 10 and its consequent analysis shows that peace can be taught if the following conditions are met: (1) the term peace is familiar; (2) there is a belief that peace can be taught in schools; (3) giving support if schools teach peace; (4) people should not tie peace to politics; and (5) formal government strategy should be designed to counter the notion that Lebanon can not teach peace in schools (countries that have undergone war). Therefore, a formal government's direction should exist on a country level that is disseminated to all educational institutions including schools. Accordingly, having formal peace education courses classified either as liberal arts courses in institutions with different technical majors (business, engineering, sciences, etc …), or as education courses in liberal arts universities (psychology, sociology, philosophy, humanities, etc …) may guide students to use a more structured approach in analyzing situations requiring the understanding of peace, harmony, and coexistence in a community. Another finding that can be drawn from this paper is that the present formal peace education curriculum does not exist, as shown in Example 6. It is worth mentioning that some respondents believe that schools that follow religious authorities (Islamic or Christian) are teaching peace because religions have innate in them the message of peace and love. Considering the fact that the researcher is a faculty member of the curriculum council at AUL may lead to an active recommendation to incorporate a set of two formal peace education courses in the electives area of the curriculum. Another recommendation is to facilitate the findings of the current research to the Ministry of Education in Lebanon to serve as a stimulus for further in depth assessment of peace education. Meanwhile, one recommendation that could be made is that instructors in schools and universities provide a formal coverage of peace within "ethics chapter" found in many textbooks used across Lebanon. Instructors may expose the differences in applications as related to culture and national preferences; and, thirdly, recommend the use of case studies on peace dilemmas and extract lessons learned. These recommendations are in parallel with what other researchers have found (Galtung, 1997).

Moreover, other initiatives, such as hosting guest speakers, offering service learning projects, and establishing endowed chairs in peace education, are highly desirable as was found by Swanson in addressing the issue of ethics education (Swanson, 2005).

Another insight that is considered important for the current study is its academic contribution to the minimal literature found on the subject matter in Lebanon. According to Aweiss (2001), research focusing on peace education in the Middle Eastern region is mainly concentrated around the Palestinian-Israeli initiative (p. 42). At the same time we must acknowledge that extensive research applied to other countries of the region are far from being comprehensive. There are only few studies that have addressed peace education in Lebanon (Ghosn, 2005). It is important to note that the results of the current research will provide exploratory findings that can be used by other researchers, Middle Eastern or others; consequently, cross-cultural comparisons could be performed. Moreover, another contribution of the current study is its stimulating effect that might lead others to test peace education.

Finally, this study has presented evidence that religion could be a factor that is credited for the formation of the personalities of students, since religion in Lebanon is considered multifunctional (see focus group outcomes in Exhibits 3, 5, and 6). That is, it impacts social issues, history, politics, science, and anthropology exactly as was found by Pearcey (2004). The researcher believes that this paper acts as an invitation to further research studies testing if the individual's religious entity makes a difference in the formation of peace-related judgments, knowing that Lebanon is considered a mosaic religious community.

Since this study involved a small population in few educational institutions, which is a limiting factor to generalize results, the similarity of the value systems with other Lebanese educational institutions may

lead to similar results. More research is needed to highlight any difference including a wider array of respondents and educational institutions.

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Appendix

No.	Concept: Peace
1	Peace is living with others safely.
2	Harmony among members of one community is not necessarily peace.
3	Peace is related to economic levels in societies whether individual or governmental.
4	Peace is utopia (perfection).
5	Peace is following the word of God in all religions.
6	Peace has no place where conflict exists.
7	Peace, there is no such concept today.
8	Peace exist if people follow their religious' teaching because all religions call for peace and love
9	Peace is stability, and if there is no stability in the world, peace does not exist**.**
10	People politicize peace.

No.	Concept: Peace Education
1	Peace can be taught in schools.
2	Peace education is teaching conflict resolution only.
3	Peace education is about teaching tolerance.
4	Peace education only exists in developed countries.
5	Countries that have undergone war can not teach peace through education in schools.

Please express freely your opinion about the concepts expressed in the following questions.

1. What is peace to you?
2. What is peace education?
3. Do schools teach peace? If so, what will the outcome be?
4. What kind of cultures results from peace education? Do you know of such cultures at this time?
5. Can schools be instrumental in enhancing the possibilities of peaceful coexistence in the future?
6. Can we prepare young people to assume responsibilities as citizens of the world?

How do you foresee the future of peace in the world?

Would you like to express another opinion related to the topic that was not covered in this questionnaire? Feel free to write your ideas.