The Need for Peace Education for University Students in Lebanon

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Abstract

Lebanon's young generations face the harshest outcomes of the country's continuous state of turmoil and instability. Regardless of their distinct social, economic and educational backgrounds, Lebanese youth seem to be victims of the aggressive politics, degenerative culture and misleading notions of what it means to be a peaceful individual. These conditions, though over-simplified, tend to necessitate a more institutionalized approach in directing youth and equipping them with peace education. This paper aims to explore the need for peace education for university students in Lebanon. It also investigates the extent to which a sample of Lebanese students and instructors are aware of the presence of the peace concept, and its method of application to the education environment. It also examines the shortcomings of current university students' peace education, and

recommends some major changes that need to be introduced to their curricula. Data is collected using a survey administered to 119 students from a variety of Lebanese universities, in addition to focus group discussions with 14 university professors. Research outcomes serve as a foundation for further research, application and or implementation of peace education in the curriculum of Lebanese universities.

Keywords: Lebanon, Peace, Peace education, University students, Curriculum

Literature Review

Peace Education in The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, to resolve conflicts and to create the conditions conducive to peace (Fountain, 1999). Galtung (1997) emphasizes that peace education should 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, p. 1). Reardon (1999; cited in Mirra, 2008) also defines peace education as being the transmission of knowledge, the training of skills for interpreting the knowledge, and the development of reflective and participatory capacities to overcome problems and achieve possibilities. More broadly, peace education is also defined as both a philosophy and process empowering people with skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe and sustainable world (Harris and Morrison, 2003).

In practice, peace education is problem-posing education that attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviors, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together for a better future. It does not pour knowledge into the minds of students or tell students what to do, nor does peace education utilize a system of experts who come into the classroom and tell students what to think. Peace education helps learners begin to raise questions and give students the tools they need to direct their learning. It is education about how to learn, not what to learn. It includes cultivating peace building skills, teaching the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence,

educating for alternative security systems, and using democratic and participatory pedagogies (Kester and Booth, 2010). Accordingly, peace education focuses on the transformation of various educational methodologies, structures, content, and pedagogy to combat violence in all its forms (Kester, 2017).

In schools and universities, peacekeeping is employed through detention, expulsion, and other threats of surveillance and punishment (Cremin and Guilherme, 2016). However, according to Bickmore (2013) and Johnson and Jonson (2013), peace building is facilitated in curriculum and pedagogy through talking-circle dialogues and conflict resolution practices. The pedagogy used in peace education is cooperative, participatory and active, including case-studies, storytelling, role plays, empathy activities, negotiations and mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles, and alternative future exercises (Kester and Booth, 2010). According to Brown and Morgan (2008), peace education should take place through discussion, with learners guiding their own education, and students should be active participants in both teaching and learning. It is essential to create an educational environment in which young people feel comfortable when learning through enquiry and co-operation, both in the actual and the virtual classroom, and in working with people whose background may be very different to their own. Inquiry-led education helps motivate learners to be confident, speak up, share opinions, resolve conflicts and raise critical questions to become reflective and active learners. Through this inquiry–based method of learning, sharing of personal knowledge and experiences, asking critical questions and listening actively to others, students experience a range of thoughts and perspectives for cultural understanding, nonviolent communication and conflict management (Kester and Booth, 2010).

Although Peace Education (PE) dialogues and reflections are grounded in the work of several educators, including John Dewey (1916), Maria Montessori (1949), Paulo Freire (1970), Betty Reardon (1988), Johan Galtung (1975), Swee-Hen Toh (2004) and Tony Jenkins (2007) (all cited in Kester, 2012, p. 1). Many contemporary scholars cite John Galtung as the "Father of Peace Studies" and Betty Reardon as the "Mother of Peace Education, "particularly as a leading pioneer in the design of education for peace programs within higher education institute (Kester, 2012, p. 2).

The university's framework includes Toh's flower-petal model that focuses on holistic understanding, dialogue, values explicit learning and critical empowerment (Toh, 2006, p. 2). It tackles different dimensions of comprehensive education for peace, human rights, intercultural understanding, social justice, environmental stewardship and inner peace. It also includes another frame work which is the learning to abolish war model of the Global Campaign for Peace Education. The second frame work adds to Toh's flower-petal model the consideration of international law, conflict resolution institutions, participatory democracy and a culture of peace approach (Kester, 2017). Students at UPEACE interact with concepts of peace building through a broad curriculum including the following courses within the PE concentration : Foundation in Peace and Conflict Studies, Peace Education : Theory and Practice ,Cultures and Learning : From Violence Towards Peace ,Practices of Conflict Management and Peacebuilding ,Language, Media and Peace, Human Rights Education ,Education for Sustainable Development and Gender and Education (Kester, 2012). Even though Peace Education has taken an important role and a significant position in many educational institutions around the world, there are only few studies that have addressed peace education in Lebanon (Ghosn, 2005; Chehimi, 2012; Chehimi and Candlin, 2013).

Although the New National Education Strategy in Lebanon (2006) includes the goals of learning responsibility, moral and ethical commitment, and developing cultural openness, critical thinking, intercultural understanding and appreciation (Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, 2006), and the aims of peace education are articulated in the UNESCO Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (The Hague Agenda, 2000), still in Lebanon, Peace Education is mainly promoted by non-governmental organizations. However, many interreligious groups dealing with peace issues have sprung in Lebanon, such as Nahwa al-Muwatiniya, Adyan, the Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, the Forum for Development, Dialogue and Culture, the Initiative of Change as well as artists, intellectuals and online activists who emphasize peace education and peace building. Many initiatives in civil society have contributed to promoting tolerance and peace since the late 1990s, and especially in the last decade. In a number of secondary classes, many activities and platforms were targeted towards common goals such as increasing tolerance, deconstructing stereotypes,

reducing prejudices, changing visions of self and other, building interreligious/inter-sectarian bridges, reinforcing a sense of collective identity, contributing to conflict resolution (Chrabieh, 2009). However, peace education in the university context, i.e., including undergraduate and graduate courses on peace or even a pedagogical approach related to peace issues in the Humanities academic curriculum, is considered to be a rare phenomenon. Little attention has been paid so far to the inclusion of peace programs in universities. Some exceptions can be noted, however, that link Peace Education to Interfaith Dialogue: St Joseph University offers a Master's degree in Muslim-Christian Relations. Other universities, such as University of Balamand, founded Centers for Interfaith Dialogue (Chrabieh, 2015). However, there are some teachers around the world who still take their own voluntary initiative to integrate peace education into their subject matter and their classes (Carter, 2008). According to Chehimi and Candlin (2013), "integrating peace education into the university curriculum should follow a formal government's direction on a country level that is disseminated to all educational institutions including schools" (p. 23). She also recommends 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 (Chehimi and Candlin, 2013, p. 23). Furthermore, Chehimi and Candlin (2013) found that the present formal peace education curriculum does not exist; only schools that follow religious authorities (Islamic or Christian) are teaching peace because religions have innate in them the message of peace and love; consequently, it is recommended to incorporate a set of two formal peace education courses in the electives area of the curriculum and 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. Moreover, instructors in schools and universities should provide a formal coverage of peace within "ethics chapter" found in many textbooks used across Lebanon. Instructors have to use case studies on peace dilemmas and extract lessons learned. These recommendations are in parallel with what other researchers have found. Moreover, other initiatives, such as hosting guest speakers, offering service learning projects, and establishing endowed chairs in peace education, are

highly desirable in addressing the issue of ethics education (Swanson, 2005).

Education for peace must be trans-disciplinary and included in all learning spaces to foster intercultural and international dialogue and respect, knowledge of national and global systems of governance, respect for all life and a commitment to no-violence (Kester and Booth, 2010). Chehimi and Candlin (2013) contend that "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" (p. 11). Further, Chehimi and Candlin assert that "multiculturalism in Lebanon constitutes a reality that must be observed and abided by when considering the institution of new educational phenomenon as peace education" (p. 12). Therefore, teaching peace to university students will have a great impact on their attitudes, their beliefs and their actions and this will eventually lead them to a better future where they can enjoy the privilege of peace, respect, tolerance and above all stability.

This research investigates the extent to which a sample of Lebanese students and instructors are aware of the presence of the peace concept, and its method of application to the education environment. It also examines the shortcomings of current university students' peace education, and recommends some major changes that need to be introduced to their curricula.

Methodology

Lebanese University students were educated in an environment of war, conflict and political unrest. What these students need is stability on the security level and peace education on the personal human level. Moreover, Lebanese university professors have also lived the same struggle therefore; students and professors' knowledge, views, attitudes and recommendations regarding peace education will be highlighted and investigated in this paper.

This research is exploratory in nature based on mixed methods approach (Creswell, 1999) which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Van Breda (2006), the direction of the research process and the research methodology are to be determined by the choice

between a qualitative and quantitative, or a mixed methods approach (p. 81).

Primary and secondary data are required in the current research; secondary data has been used in the literature review to provide the theoretical and historical grounding concerning peace, peace education, and peace education in Lebanon, and is collected from studies and publications about the topics in question. Primary data is collected directly from a sample of respondents and results are used to show the need for peace education for Lebanese university students and their willingness for change.

Research instrument

The research instruments used were a survey questionnaire and focus group discussions. The survey questionnaire was based on previous qualitative and quantitative research outcomes in the field of peace education conducted by the co-author of this paper (Chehimi, 2012; Chehimi and Candlin, 2013).

The modified questionnaire consists of four sections with fourteen questions: the first section consists of five dichotomous questions whose purpose is to assess the participants' knowledge about peace and peace education; the second section with two questions to assess the respondents' attitude towards acceptance and tolerance; the third section consists of a set of two open-ended questions assessing the respondents' personal views about peace and peace education; and the fourth section consists of 3 demographic questions related to gender, age and university status. The statements utilized in section two were designed using 5-levels Likert scale, where respondents are given five levels of choice ranging from "strongly agree to strongly disagree".

Sample selection

The questionnaire was distributed online to 200 Lebanese university students, who willingly provided their e-mail addresses. The number of participants who responded fully to the survey was 119, making the response rate 99.2%.

The current research focuses on the need of Lebanese university students for peace education and highlights their views on the topics related to peace and peace education. This need will also be studied from University professors' point of view. The participants are students and professors from several Lebanese universities. One public, the Lebanese University (LU) and four private; The Lebanese International University (LIU), the Lebanese American University (LAU), American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Islamic University of Lebanon (IUL).

Data analysis

Data generated from the survey was processed using SPSS 17.0 "Statistical product and Service Solutions", the SPSS version 17, an IBM product acquired by IBM IN 2009 (Hejase and Hejase, 2013, p. 58) and was classified, organized and presented using descriptive statistics.

As for the qualitative data collection, two focus group discussions were conducted with university professors from different universities who were willing to participate in the study where each consisted of seven members with one of the researchers conducting the discussion/interview herself. The two sessions were conducted in informal settings outside university premises.

Results and Findings
Survey Analysis
Demographics

Results show that respondents are 49.6% (59/119) males, and 50.4% females 60/119. Respondents' age fall into the range of 17 and 26 years with an average age of 23 years. Furthermore, results show that 52.94% (63/119) of the respondents are sophomore students; 22.69% (27/119) are junior students; and 24.4% (29/119) are senior students.

Peace and Peace education
Respondents were asked if peace could be taught in school, results show that 74% affirming that peace could be taught, 22% answered maybe, and 4% who believed that peace could not be taught in schools. Figure 1 depicts the results.
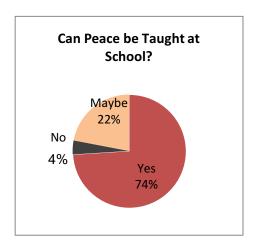
Can Peace be Taught at School?

Maybe 22%

No 4%

Yes 74%

Figure 1. Teaching peace in schools

Respondents were then asked if they had been exposed to lessons related to peace in school, and their responses were very close yet opposite, whereby 51% said that they had been taught about peace in school and 49% said that they were not. In this case, it must be noted that there are no official peace lessons or courses in the Lebanese curriculum for schools. This might explain why students responded so conversely to this question; where they may have considered some lessons in Civics Education as relating to peace, while others simply did not make that relation. This question asserts the confusion about what some may consider peace education and what some may not.

In line with determining students' theoretical and ethical understanding of peace, they were asked if peace by definition meant the absence of war. The overwhelming response of 99% of the respondents was that peace does not mean the absence of war. Then, when the respondents were asked if they are familiar with the term "peace education", results show that 59% of the respondents are not familiar with the term as opposed to 41% who confirmed that they have been introduced to the term before (see Figure 2).
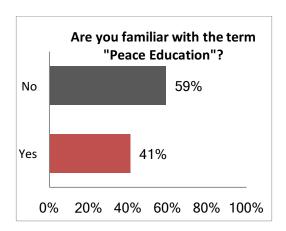
Figure 2. Familiarity with Peace Education

Other results are depicted in Figures 3 and 4. Figure 3 shows students' responses to the statement "Lebanese university students accept each other as they are". 40% provided a neutral stance to the statement, 27% negated the statement, while 33% approved of the claim. While Figure 4 depicts the responses to the statement "universities provide lessons of tolerance and acceptance". The majority of 44% provided a neutral response, followed by 32% who disagreed and 24% who agreed that universities contribute with lessons of tolerance and acceptance.
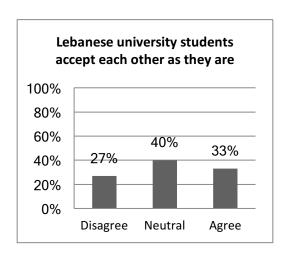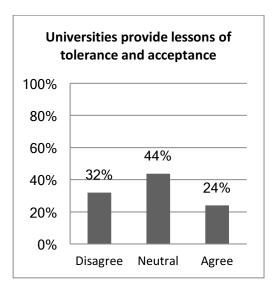

Figure 3. Acceptance

Figure 4. Lessons of tolerance and acceptance

On the other hand, Figure 5 displays that the majority of the respondents (85%) think that peace education should be taught in universities. While only 1% disagreed and said that it shouldn't and 14% responded with maybe.
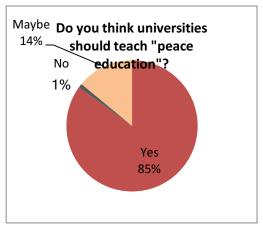

Figure 5. Teaching peace education

When the students were asked whether they had been exposed to material relating to peace or peace education in university, only 14% said

that they had taken a course dealing with the topics. 86% of respondents have not taken any courses that deal with peace or peace education. This asserts the need to integrate peace education courses in the university curriculum. Moreover, the overwhelming majority or 92% of the respondents answered yes to the question: "did conflict and war create prejudices among Lebanese people?" The aforementioned majority of university students believe that prejudices exist among Lebanese people as a result of war and conflicts, while 8% do not believe that prejudices exist. This result confirms the need for intervention to help students overcome their prejudices and this requires peace education.

Section three of the questionnaire consists of two open-ended questions. The first was "what can be added to the university curriculum to teach students the value of human differences, tolerance, respect and understanding?

Students' answers were somehow similar and revolved around the main theme and most suggested that universities should provide obligatory sessions or courses in human rights and/or peace education. Exhibit 1 shows a sample of the answers given.

Exhibit 1. Content of university curriculum

> Lessons about the acceptance of diversity Study about other cultures
> I think why not to add a course that every student must take in their curriculum that talks about human rights and moral values and how to stop the differentiation between people especially us the Lebanese.
> A course of peace education could be taught because simply peace is summation of all human values found and thus it would enhance the positivity among students and even instructors.
> Teaching civics for all majors
> Courses that look into other people's cultures/religions.
> Teaching acceptance and tolerance.
> Interaction and team building with a variety of people from different backgrounds.

The second open question asks students to define peace. Exhibit 2 shows a sample of the students' perception of peace.

Exhibit 2. Definition of peace

> ➢ Peace is a state of harmony and tranquility with oneself and with others
> ➢ Peace is when people are able to resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives
> ➢ Peace is the presence of tolerance and love between people and it's the absence of war
> ➢ Peace is a state of mind
> ➢ Peace could be many things, but if I had to summarize it in one idea. It is the ability to coexist with others in harmony and respect without overstepping on the other side's freedom or rights.
> ➢ Peace is a spiritual as well as mind comfort with inner self it starts inside every individual alone and then spreads its positive impact through the whole universe

Focus Group Discussion Analysis

For the qualitative data collection, two focus group discussions were conducted. Professors from different universities participated in these discussions. The first one was held in December 2016 and the second was in January 2017. The participants were both males and females in both groups but with the majority (9/14) or 64.3% were females. Through these focus groups, the researchers wanted to gather information about the professors' knowledge, attitudes and recommendations regarding the need for peace education for university students in Lebanon. Professors' role in this study was essential because they are at the core of this issue and they are supposed to be the most cognizant of the university students' needs. 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, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (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 researchers concur with such argument, because such findings can provide a unique insight into existing beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes toward peace and peace education. According to Kreuger (1988), data can be examined and reported at three levels, including 1) the raw data, 2) descriptive statements, and 3) interpretation. Statements were concocted from the questions asked to the members of the focus groups and were interpreted accordingly. Both groups' responses are combined in the following outcomes and a sample of what was stated, whether they shared consensus or disagreed, both views are reported.

Outcome 1. To understand their knowledge of "Peace"

What is peace?

- ➢ a state of forgiveness
- ➢ Opposite of war
- ➢ Harmonious interactions among people
- ➢ Living without any offensive actions
- ➢ Peace does not exist

One finds here that the participants' understanding of "peace" is related to their own beliefs and experiences.

Outcome 2. To check if they knew what peace education is

What is peace education?

- ➢ No idea at all
- ➢ I know there are majors and programs that are intended to educate for peace like peace building and conflict resolution
- ➢ To teach the peace in the curriculum, I am wondering; no idea

Most of the participants (10/14 or 71.43%) did not know exactly what peace education is. Therefore, the researcher conducting the discussions had to explain the term to be able to carry on with the rest of the questions.

This result shows that even professors are not exposed to such education and this requires attention and further exploration.

Outcome 3. To find out if peace education is taught at Lebanese universities

Do Lebanese universities teach peace education?

- ➢ We teach conflict resolution
- ➢ I don't think so
- ➢ Actually we try to teach values throughout English books, discussions, reading texts and writing. We try to include many values, but I don't know if they match with peace education.
- ➢ It is introduced in some courses indirectly
- ➢ We teach building character personality which serves peace education. Every teacher addresses peace education at one stage or another but indirectly as it is a part of a hidden curriculum; we may discuss values in classrooms which I think is peace education.

This depicts the confusion in the actual knowledge related to peace education and the concept of peace itself and whether it is taught at the Lebanese universities. Participants tried to relate peace education courses to any other courses that deal with peace or peace studies.

Outcome 4. To see if there is a need to teach peace education

Is there a need to teach peace education for university students?

- ➢ Yes
- ➢ Absolutely
- ➢ For sure we need it
- ➢ Instead of teaching about the effects of war on environment and health ,we should teach about peace and its impact
- ➢ We sure do but it doesn't work unless we start from school; there are certain things that don't drop from sky; it is something that grows with the child. If there is an effort and declared intention to do this we can do it.

All participants agreed that there is a need to teach peace education for university students. They also gave recommendations for starting peace education at an earlier stage in the students' lives to have better results.

Outcome 5. To explore the readiness of universities to take on peace education

Do you think universities are ready to take on peace education as part of their curriculum?

➢ No, I don't think so
➢ As a distinctive part, something by itself, I can't even answer that because it depends on what is going on at administrative levels, but some university graduate students are well ingrained with skills and values that tackle peace education
➢ There are lots of faculties that teach conflict resolution
➢ I don't think they are ready
➢ We need to have graduates with Peace Building degrees to take on this educational project

Most participants do not think that universities are ready to take on peace education as part of their curriculum. However, few confused peace education with conflict resolution for being the same. Some participants believed that it is the administration at the university is responsible for this implementation and others recommended that specialized teachers in peace building should take on this teaching task.

Outcome 6. To find out whether university students need such education and the purpose for it.

Do you think that university students need peace education and why?

➢ We are not just teaching academics; we are preparing students to become better responsible citizens
➢ It is a must and the reason is that our culture, education and society emphasize war a lot, so we need something to change this mentality and mindset. We have seen the result among this generation that have been raised and brought on war.

- We have to make a change; the students are at risk (irresponsible, bad behavior, drugs and alcohols); we need good mental health and we have to start with peace education.
- The concept of peace building is rooted in religion and we have to emphasize its importance from this perspective to appeal the students.

All participants are well aware that students are in urgent need for peace education because they were not raised in a healthy and peaceful environment. Some recommended that teachers should emphasize the concept of peace which is rooted in all religions and this is a natural outcome in a country like Lebanon which is mainly driven by religious beliefs and belongings.

Outcome 7. To find out if professors expect good results after administering peace education

As university professors, do you expect any kind of change in students' behavior and attitudes after such instruction?

- If it is well handled, yes
- If teachers are well trained on teaching peace and how to implement peace education; if workshops are conducted, teachers may be well trained and make a difference
- some teachers can't handle such kind of instruction; they don't have peace within themselves ; they have to be well trained so they can train students
- Young teachers in particular need training and experience. Some have knowledge about peace education but they need shaping and training.
- The students are ready and they have potentials
- Lecturing won't make a change but projects and case studies would certainly do

This shows that professors believe that change can happen because students are ready and have the potential to learn and change their behaviors and attitudes provided that the program is handled well and teachers are well trained.

Outcome 8. To check if peace education courses can be integrated in the curriculum and how

What departments can include or integrate peace education as a major or elective course?

➢ Educational psychology should implement peace education
➢ It could be interdisciplinary; you can teach peace education through languages, through your choice of texts, you can teach anything about real life situations. In political science courses, they focus on conflict resolution, critical thinking and reasoning.
➢ In business courses , customer service

This shows that even professors find it difficult to fit or integrate peace education courses into the curriculum even though they suggested few courses where they can implement it.

Discussion and Recommendations

This research provides several insights. First, in relation to answering the question "can peace be taught", referring to the survey and focus groups results and their consequent analysis shows that peace can be taught whereby 74% of the students agreed and 12 out of 14 (85.71%) of the instructors also agreed. Further, the instructors related teaching peace to responsible citizenship, to deploy change, to abolish bad habits, and should capitalize on religious principles. These results confirm previous research outcomes reported by Chehimi (2012) and Chehimi and Candlin (2013). Moreover, results show that both groups show a weak awareness on the following themes:

(1) Familiarity with peace education: 41% of the students confirmed versus (4/14) 28.57% of the instructors.

(2) Students' exposition to class themes related to peace education in their universities: both groups showed some notions of peace education where 14% of the students confirmed being exposed through their civic education and 24% being exposed to lessons of tolerance and acceptance, versus all instructors who believe that students are taught conflict resolution skills, values, and personality improvement lessons. The aforementioned

skills are somehow asserted by Kester (2012) who contends that "students at the UN University for Peace (UPEACE) interact with concepts of social justice and peace building through exploration of the values, beliefs and worldviews present among cultures of the diverse student body" (p. 5).

(3) Can peace education be taught in the Lebanese universities: 85% of the students agreed that peace education can be taught while 100% of the instructors strongly agreed that there is a need. However, based on the previous responses, and reviewing the outcomes achieved by Chehimi (2012) and Chehimi and Candlin (2013), one finds there is a challenge to implement peace education in Lebanon. Chehimi and Candlin concluded that "teaching peace education is possible if the following conditions are met: (a) the term peace is familiar; (b) there is a belief that peace can be taught in schools; (c) giving support if schools teach peace; (d) people should not tie peace to politics; and (e) formal government strategy should be designed to counter the notion that Lebanon cannot teach peace in schools (countries that have undergone war)" (Chehimi and Candlin, 2013, p. 22).

A second insight is based on the findings that show that it is imperative to teach peace education to university students because only 33% of the students believe that Lebanese students accept each other as they are (taking into consideration that the majority are politicized); while 44% kept neutral about their responses; and 92% of the students also believe that the continuous conflicts and wars created prejudice among Lebanese people. Based on the above, both students and instructors were asked what to add to the Lebanese universities' curricula to instill change, and their responses shown in Exhibit 1 and Outcomes 5 and 6 emphasize civic education, conflict resolution, acceptance of diversity, tolerance, and capitalizing on religious beliefs. These notions were emphasized earlier by the integrated framework on education for peace, human rights and democracy (UNESCO, 1995). On the other hand, Kester (2012) recommends that peace education programs should "contain diverse worldviews, nonviolent methods of social transformation, case studies of peacemakers, human rights and responsibilities" (p. 6)

A third insight of importance is the fact that the Lebanese university professors involved in this research, manifested a great interest in peace education after they were introduced to it. They believe that Lebanese university students do need this education and they agree that it will

certainly make a big difference in students' lives, behaviors and attitudes providing a well-planned and well -handled program/ curriculum along with professional development for instructors.

One final insight of great importance for this research is its academic contribution to the few recorded literature found on the subject matter in Lebanon (Ghosn, 2005, Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, 2006; Zakharia, 2011; Chehimi, 2012; Chehimi and Candlin, 2013). Though, it is worth mentioning that much of the reported research in the Middle East concentrates more on the Palestinian-Israeli initiatives, for example among others (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Aweiss, 2001; Zamir, 2004; Maoz, 2011; Gawerc, 2012; Schroeder and Risen, 2014; and Lazarus, 2015). In addition, the results of this research will provide more exploratory findings that can be used by other Middle Eastern or other researchers; 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.

Limitations

The findings of this research cannot be generalized because of the low number of student respondents, a larger number is required to cover all universities in Lebanon. This will allow the researchers to have richer data base to form a strong appeal for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to adopt peace education as part of the university curriculum. Another limitation for this study was the unavailability of many university administrators to participate in this research which could have added valuable information and recommendations to gain more accurate results regarding the university curriculum.

Acknowledgements

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