

EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND PEACE CULTURE IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF  
ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS IN SELECTED  
MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

BY

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Kulliyyah of Education  
International Islamic University Malaysia

OCTOBER 2020

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the roles and attitudes of Malaysian academic administrators in promoting peace in higher institution. It also aims to understand how academic administrators understand peace and peace culture, the benefits and challenges faced by them to promote it. This study has employed a qualitative design, with the informants consisting of ten lecturers selected from four different universities located in Klang Valley Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia using purposive sampling technique. Utilizing in-depth semi-structured interview as a data collection method, it revealed valuable input to this study. Triangulation exercise between field notes, interviews and personal memos were carried out to establish trustworthiness and credibility of data. Thematic analysis was used and amongst the most important themes were extracted to answer all of the research questions. The findings suggested that academic lecturers' roles and attitudes were profound towards Education for Peace and their effort to spread its mission in public universities even though little is known about it. There are pre-requisites, benefits and challenges when implementing Education for Peace in higher education. The need for peace pedagogy, leadership capacity and enculturation of peace culture are indispensable to bring Education for Peace in higher education despite challenges that posed as hindrance towards the processes such as long-term planning, lack of awareness and applicability of Education for Peace in higher education. Future research is commended to observe the level of awareness on this subject for both students and lecturers.

## خلاصة البحث

تستقصي هذه الدراسة أدوار وتوجهات المسؤولين الأكاديميين الماليزيين في عملية تعزيز روح السلام في مؤسسات التعليم العالي، كما تهدف إلى التعرف على مدى استيعابهم لمفهوم السلام وثقافة السلام، علاوة على إلقاء الضوء على الفوائد والتحديات التي يواجهونها خلال تلك العملية. تنتمي هذه الدراسة إلى مناهج البحث النوعي، حيث تم اختيار أفراد عينة قصدية تمثلت في عشرة محاضرين تم اختيارهم من أربع جامعات مختلفة تقع في وادي كلانغ بمدينة كوالالمبور، ماليزيا، وقد خضعوا لمقابلات متعمقة شبه منظمة كأداة لجمع البيانات، وقد أسفرت تلك المقابلات عن مدخلات قيّمة لهذه الدراسة. وقد استعمل الباحث أحد أساليب جمع البيانات المسمى بأسلوب التثليث، حيث جمع ملاحظات الباحث الميدانية، مع كلٍّ من المذكرات الشخصية والبيانات الناتجة من المقابلات، وذلك من أجل ضمان ثبات ومصداقية البيانات. تم تحليل البيانات الناتجة من المقابلات باستخدام تحليل الخصائص المميزة، من أجل الإجابة على جميع أسئلة البحث. وقد أسفرت نتائج الدراسة عن أن أدوار وتوجهات المحاضرين الأكاديميين كانت مؤثرة تجاه كل من عملية التعليم من أجل السلام، وكذلك الجهود التي بذلوها لنشر تلك الرسالة في الجامعات الحكومية، على الرغم من ضآلة المعلومات المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع. لقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن هناك متطلبات مسبقة وفوائد وتحديات تبرز عند الشروع في تنفيذ عملية التعليم من أجل السلام في مؤسسات التعليم العالي. إن الثلاثية المتمثلة في كل من التربية من أجل السلام، وكفاءة القيادة، وتشجيع ثقافة السلام، لا غنى عنها لتحقيق التعليم من أجل السلام، على الرغم مما يشوب تلك العملية من تحديات قد تمثل عقبات كبيرة نحو تحقيقها، من مثل التخطيط طويل المدى، وقلة الوعي، ومدى قابلية تطبيق التعليم من أجل السلام في مؤسسات التعليم العالي. توصي هذه الدراسة بإجراء المزيد من الأبحاث المستقبلية لمعرفة درجة وعي كلٍّ من الطلاب والمحاضرين بهذا الموضوع.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*This thesis is dedicated to my other half, Nur Edzati Kamaluddin for her never ending forgoes, backing and support upon completion of this journey. To my fellow Malaysian, this thesis is a proof that peace will remain relevant throughout the time. Never lose hope in maintaining her peace in many years to come. To all innocent souls that have been treated with injustice and cruelty, this thesis is for you.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise be to Him alone the most Merciful, Allah (the Almighty). *Salawat* and *Salam* for the beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) his families and noble companions who have showed us the true meaning of practicing peace themselves.

My gratitude goes to Allah SWT who had allow me once again to complete this PhD journey at this prestigious ivory tower, International Islamic University Malaysia.

My earnest indebtedness goes to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Afareez Abd Razak Al-Hafiz as my main supervisor for accepting me to be his mentee again. Little did I know this scholarly journey is realizable since day one of receiving the offer letter from the university. I had been taught, challenged supervised and given wisdom of what PhD is all about. Nonetheless, this is not the end of my learning rather it is just a beginning with a whole new horizon. I would like also to show my thankfulness to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Faizah Idrus who acted as my second supervisor who had supported, encouraged and mentored me in completing this thesis. I would like also to extent my appreciation to Prof. Dr. Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail and Prof. Dr. Ismail Sheikh Ahmad for providing me with assistance and intellectual advices along the journey.

From the first day I enrolled in this course, I do not know that it comes with a package of surviving a deadly pandemic. During the MCO, keeping in touch and stay focus is another challenge for me. This would not be possible without the help from my dear comrades Dr. Hamidah Mohamad, Dr. Nik Muhamad Hanis, Br. Syukri Abd Hamid and the rest of PhD survivors at Doctorate Support Group in Facebook. With all you guys I felt it lighter to reach until the end of the line.

I am extremely grateful as well to have a strong family backing especially from my soulmate Nur Edzati Kamaluddin, my mom Zaharah Sh. Salim, my dad Khairuddin Jamaluddin and all kind-hearted souls that came from both my in-laws and my own family that have given their best in supporting me each and every time needed. Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.

Not to forget my appreciation to the KGPC's office members Br. Firdaus, Sr. Fajariah, Sr. Norsiah from Department of Social Foundations and Educational Leadership and Br. Ihsan from Center for Postgraduate Studies who offered me assistance during this turbulent time.

Finally, may this thesis bring a trivial illumination to the topic of peace and become a useful reference for anyone who read this thesis in one way or another. Thank you Allah s.w.t again for this opportunity and happy reading!



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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Earth is the habitation for seven plus billions human beings. Imagine if this population lives in chaos and disharmony where no concept of tolerance is being practiced, no room for discussion and there is no place for differences of opinions. How disastrous can it be? In other words, this condition is prone to the possibility of war and chaos. War is a learned behavior. Stoessinger (2005) argued that war is a learned behavior and therefore it can be unlearned. He added that if during the Ice Age there were practices that were considered acceptable such as incest, cannibalism and slavery. Cannibalism is almost unheard of now. This is because human beings have shown the capacity for growth for a better state and conditions. Likewise, war can be eliminated from mankind's wrongdoings (Stoessinger, 2005).

The question is; what is the antonym for war? The answer is Peace. Peace is not just by definition which means the absence of war. Instead, it also means tolerance and learning to respect others' cultures and belief systems. Behind the epistemology of Peace is a set of philosophical dimension between what is good and what is wrong. Furthermore, to study this topic in a great depth requires the understanding from different angles that involves Education for Peace and Peace Culture. Peace Education consists of multiple disciplines involving Peace-conflict studies, leadership studies and epistemology of Peace. Thus, this investigation intends to only focus on the aspect Education for Peace and Peace Culture in Malaysian public universities.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, peace is the central themes in education. Many countries have already incorporated this aspect in their curriculum, administration and visions

towards achieving peace and harmony (Al-Smadi, AbuQudais, & Mahasneh, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2009; Exton & Enloe, 2015; Harris, 2002; Levy, 2014). Moreover, El-Muhammady (2016) stated that in combating terrorism, there are only two approaches namely kinetic and soft approaches. Kinetic means using military force while soft approach is defined by educational means. In other words, we can infer that education is the second pillar in countering terrorism.

However, Peace studies is an interdisciplinary discipline in nature where it encompasses a multiple dimensions and approaches in its implementation. This includes economic, political, social, spiritual and educational aspects (Köylü, 2003, 2004). In order to make Education for Peace comprehensible, one must understand the gist of it through multiple lenses of inter-connected domain of peace.

One of the pioneer in 20<sup>th</sup> century when talking about peace especially peace building and peace education is Johan Galtung. He addressed this topic in great length from its epistemology to its application in real world through solving conflicts between nations at war. Johan Galtung is also one of the founders of the International Peace Research Association. One of his seminal work on peace is on the classification between negative peace and positive peace (Harris, 2002). Negative peace brings about the absence of direct and personal violence towards others by averting war or stopping violence. Meanwhile positive peace is a state of non-violence and ecological sustainability and social justice. Positive peace requires both adoption of a set of beliefs by individuals and the presence of social institutions that provide for an equitable distribution of resources and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Harris, 2002).

Akinyoade (2012) in his paper described multiple concepts of peace study by also citing Johan Galtung on three epistemological branches of Peace and Conflict Studies. They are empirical peace studies, critical peace studies, and constructive



peace studies. According to him, empirical peace studies is based on empiricism where systematic comparison of theories are used with empirical reality (data). It needs the effort of revising the theories with data which means the incongruity of the data with theories means data being stronger, than theory. Secondly, critical peace study is derived from the basis of criticism. It means a systematic comparison of empirical reality (data) with values, trying, in words and/or in action. Its purpose is more on to change reality if it does not agree with the values. In this case, values are considered being stronger than data. Lastly, constructive peace studies is based on constructivism. The study involves systematic comparison of theories with values, trying to adjust theories to values and producing visions of a new reality. In this mode, values are considered being stronger than theory (Akinyoade, 2012). This current research intends to study the topic based on empirical peace studies approach so that theories can be derived and compared with the data acquired and formulate findings useful in the field of peace studies.

Apart from that, there is another argument about the philosophical foundation for peace education. Page (2008) argues that there are five possible ethical philosophical foundations for peace education namely virtue ethics, consequentialist ethics, conservative political ethics, aesthetic ethics and ethics of care. He argues that if any educational activity requires its own philosophy so does peace education. It is needed to explain the 'why' it is important in order to be studied or implemented (Page, 2008). He further argues that peace education is not simply a mere political correctness, a form of indoctrination or as a form of an apologetics of peace but rather has its own developed philosophy of peace education. Taking back what Galtung and Kantian theories are peace can include, direct peace, structural peace and cultural peace. While Kantian epistemology of education and peace is rather defined as

categorical imperative (Page, 2008). It means our actions must be morally universal and we must regard humans as ends in themselves. It also means an unconditional principle that we must always follow despite any natural desires or inclinations we may have to the contrary (Johnson & Cureton, 2017).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

University is the highest level of education ones can attain. It serves as the beacon of light to the society to bring change and foster improvement in a country (Razak, 2018). Likewise, the tower of beacon is used to guide the ships in their sailing routes at sea. Thus, a university's role should be more than just transmitting information to students, preparing them to be in the workforce, or provide them a future spouse. Rather it should serve as a platform to emancipate the mind and instill highest values of life one can uphold (Embong, 2005). In addition, a university is not only for higher learning activities such as the traditional roles and functions such as teaching, research, publication and services but it is supposed to advocate and propagate a certain culture and environment that appreciates the freedom of inquiry and expression (Embong, 2005). Furthermore, the concept of a university is not merely for the purpose of learning and teaching, it also serves as the creation of new knowledge, widening existing knowledge through research activities and to provide services to the society in various fields (Da Wan, Sirat, & Razak, 2015).

Besides, Embong (2005) also stated that a higher learning institution is where the celebration of differences are imparted; critical thinking is celebrated and promotes the emancipation of mind. However, these ideas are often being challenged by the struggle for being 'relevant' to the market or how university can contribute to the economy. In other words, the issue of knowledge being increasingly commodified

and the driving forces of neo-liberal globalization have made the idea of higher education being challenged. It will serve of no difference between higher and other levels of education if the essence of a 'higher' education is non-existence.

Universities have been entrusted to produce ground breaking theories and research, however, the questions of whether these findings can bring positive impacts to the peaceable condition of the society at large remain unknown. In the case of Malaysia, it has twenty one public universities and hundreds more private higher education institutions that have been entrusted with this vision. In a country consists of multi-cultural and multi-racial background citizens like Malaysia, peace is the essence that made living with each other in harmony possible. Peace can be achieved not only by learning about it, but it has to be experienced with and live with (Danesh, 2011; Embong, 2005; Galtung, 1967; Hicks, 1988; Köylü, 2004). To achieve this aspiration, Malaysian universities need to be equipped with new culture, new pedagogical approach and new way of inculcating the importance of maintaining peace among its students. However, little is known on how to bridge the gap between theories of peace and practices in higher education setting in Malaysia. Therefore, it is proposed in this study that better understanding is sought through investigating how education for peace and peace culture help in realizing those aspirations in higher education institution in Malaysia.

Furthermore, little is known on what Education for Peace (EFP) is about especially in the context of higher education and its impact in bringing peace culture and promoting positive peace in Malaysian public universities. Attitude towards peace among lecturers is important to be studied and how their roles can make a difference when interacting with students, among faculty members and university's climate as a whole which will bring in peace culture as a result of positive peace. What is more

important question here is not about within the university itself but how this kind of knowledge should bring benefit to the society as a whole. With the recent development, higher education climate has witnessed a shocking absence of peace culture in which bully cases have risen to another level. One case was where one cadet officer was tortured to death by his varsity mates. The case has shaken the whole nation and all eighteen individuals were found guilty for their act. Six of them were charged with murder and abetment, while the other 12 were charged with voluntarily causing hurt (Malaysiakini, 2019). This is just one example of absence of peace in higher education and if at this level students are not able to appreciate peace how can it be transferred into the community. Furthermore, not only students were not able to appreciate peace, lecturers were also found to be involved in terrorism activities which later contributed to the bad picture of Malaysian higher education as a whole (El-Muhammady, 2018a; Mustafa, 2017; Samuel, 2018; Stevens et al., 2011; Zolkepli & Tan, 2018).

According to findings by counter-terrorism analysts, they found over 340 Malaysian convicts that associated with terrorism activities since 2013 (El-Muhammady, 2018a). This number posits a serious issue to Malaysian higher education because 12 percent of the confirmed cases were originated from educational sectors such as schools, colleges and universities. For instance, the infamous case of Dr. Mahmud Ahmad who is a former lecturer at University of Malaya and Aishah Atam's case who is a graduate student in University of Malaya. Both of them has found to be linked with violent extremism group namely Daesh movement. However, to date there is little to almost none intervention from the Ministry of Higher Education that has specifically address this issue let alone to curb the extremist activities in campus taken by the authorities. Thus, the presence of several cases of

extremism inside campus is more than enough reason for the Ministry and university stake holders to take preventive measures. This state is worrying since it is actually at the university students and lecturers are entrusted with bringing 'the light' to the society as opposed the one who put it off or even worse to bring the wrong ideologies into the society.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This investigation tries to unearth the roles and attitudes of academic administrators in Malaysian public universities in promoting Education for Peace and Peace Culture. It also seeks to explain the landscape of leadership within which the informants' way in utilizing leadership capacities in promoting education for peace in higher educational environment. In realizing this mission, change should start from the leaders first then only to be transferred to the followers. Education for Peace can be one of the solutions in which it is the catalyst for change in Malaysian higher education settings. In order to educate younger generation about the importance of peace and how it affects ones country, it must start from top to bottom to maintain its stability and harmonious environment (Kadir, Jamal, & Ismail, 2014; Shamsul & Anis, 2011). Education for peace also can exhibit the possibilities of leadership in bringing change for a better Malaysia where leaders play an active role in making sure how the change is possible.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the roles and attitudes of universities' academic administrator in promoting Educational leadership for Peace.
2. Explore the aspects of education for peace that should be interpolated in Malaysian public universities.
3. Uncover the benefits of Education for Peace in Malaysian Public universities.
4. Understand the feasibility of Educational Leadership for peace among academic administrators.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on these objectives, four research questions have been drawn. They are:

- RQ1: a) What are the roles of universities lecturers in promoting Education for Peace?
- b) What are the attitudes of universities lecturers in promoting education for peace?
- RQ2: What are the aspects contributing to Education for Peace that can be interpolated in Malaysian public universities?
- RQ3: How can Education for Peace bring a benefit in the climate of Malaysian public universities?
- RQ4: What are the challenges of Education for Peace for academic administrator to be carried out in Malaysian public universities?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is deemed essential for the field of higher education in Malaysia. This is because it bridges the gap between Education for Peace and higher education that may generate new practices and ideas on how academic administrators utilize universities as a platform to promote peace and peace culture. There is a huge gap in the literature that yet to discuss on this area especially in Malaysian context as opposed to many studies which have covered only at school level. The importance of Education for Peace and Peace Culture at tertiary level is vital as it is at this stage students, professors and the whole campus community serve as the fertile ground for future peace leaders to learn, debates and practice (Alomair, 2016; Danesh, 2011; El-Muhammady, 2018a; Embong, 2005; Köylü, 2004; Samuel, 2018; Sri-Amnuay, 2011).

This study may also help uncover the role of universities to convey an awareness of the distinctiveness of Malaysian complexity in achieving a well-balanced, socio-economic diverse and united country by 2020 through Malaysian Education Blueprint (Da Wan, Sirat, & Razak, 2015; Hussin, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2013; Quddus & Ahmad, 2016; Rosnani, 2018; Wan Mohd Nordin, 2018). Da Wan et al., (2015) discussed the roles of both public and private universities in bringing impacts to societal institutions in this developing country. Their study discussed how Malaysian universities should be rooted fundamentally in the National Education Philosophy (NEP) and re-introduced in the society not as factory worker providers but as a platform to nurturing a balanced person. Finally, in realizing the stated vision, this study may shed a light to educational stakeholders and policymakers with a hint to continue broader investigation that may include the whole country's

higher educational institution. Thus, making Malaysian higher education as a leading entity in championing peace studies in ASEAN region.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **Peace**

According to Galtung (1996) peace is the absent of violence. It has two forms namely positive and negative peace. Positive peace means a condition where social justice, respecting human rights and ecological sustainability is established in a society. Whereas negative peace means the cessation of violence or the absence of direct, personal violence (Harris, 2002).

### **Peace culture**

The United Nations definition of a culture of peace in 1999 through Resolution 53/25 named Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. The Resolution defines a culture of peace relying on positive peace (UN General Assembly, 1999) that is more than the absence of violence. Schellhammer (2016) defined culture of peace as follows:

Respect for life and non-violence, acknowledging sovereignty, human rights and fundamental freedoms, commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, meeting developmental and environmental needs, gender equality, freedom of expression, opinion and information and a commitment to principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations. (p. 208)