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**ROLE OF EDUCATION IN CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

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Role of Education in Conflict Management in Afghanistan

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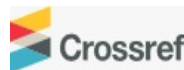
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Abstract

Purpose: The study sought to analyze the role of education in conflict management in Afghanistan.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The results show that education plays an important role in conflict management. Education is used to promote human rights, strengthen civil society and foster greater respect for the rule of law. Education is used to promote understanding between different cultures and beliefs and to reduce the potential for violence. The Afghan government has implemented a number of initiatives to improve the access to quality education for all Afghans such as to promote peace and reconciliation between different ethnic and religious groups, and to create a sense of national identity. Education has been a powerful tool in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, and the Afghan government should continue to prioritize education in its efforts to bring lasting peace and prosperity to the country.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practices and Policies: The educational theory and cognitive theory may be used to anchor future studies in the conflict management sector. The study results will also benefit other stakeholders such as the policy makers as well as researchers and scholars from different parts of the world. The top management of conflict management sector in the country will also use the study findings to improve leadership performance in all their activities and programs. The study recommends that the adoption of effective conflict management policies in the leadership sector will help to improve efficiency in their major operations and activities.

Keywords: *Role, Education, Conflict Management, Afghanistan*

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INTRODUCTION.

Conflict management is a process of resolving disputes or disagreements between two or more parties. It involves using various methods, such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Conflict management is a necessary skill in any society and can be used to prevent and resolve conflicts in a constructive and peaceful manner. Education has been seen as a key factor in conflict management and resolution for many years (Akgun, 2014). It is often argued that education can be used to create a more peaceful and harmonious society by teaching people the skills and knowledge required to resolve conflicts constructively. Education is an essential part of human life. It has the potential to shape the way we think, feel and act. Education is a powerful tool that can be used to reduce conflict and create a more peaceful and equitable world. Education is a key factor in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as it provides people with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to manage and resolve conflicts in a constructive way (Messarra, 2016). It also promotes tolerance and understanding of different cultures and beliefs. Education has the potential to be a powerful tool for peacebuilding. It is used to foster understanding between different groups and to reduce the potential for violence. It is used to challenge existing structures of power and inequality, which are often at the root of conflicts. Education provide people with the skills they need to understand the root causes of conflicts and to develop strategies for resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner. It provides people with the knowledge they need to understand the different sides of a conflict and to develop strategies for dialogue and constructive engagement.

Education is used to promote human rights and strengthen civil society. Education can help to raise public awareness of human rights issues, and to provide people with the knowledge and skills they need to protect their rights. (Sánchez, 2017). The conflict in Afghanistan has been characterized by violence between different ethnic and religious groups, with the Taliban and other extremist groups playing a major role in the violence. Afghanistan as a country with a history of conflict has been experiencing education's dual roles. Since 1979, Afghanistan has experienced several different power regimes each of which has dominated the country's education system, particularly the school curriculum, to reflect its preferred political ideology and school textbooks have been used to provide preferred information for students (Pherali, 2018). Between 1979 and 1992, Afghanistan was under the control of two main opposition parties, the government of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) that had more control in cities and the Islamic Jihadi Groups as opposition groups which were active at the provincial level. These groups comprise the Mujahedeen. The Afghanistan Ministry of Education under the PDPA, with the support of the Soviet Union's experts, integrated Communist ideology into the education curriculum, school textbooks and teacher education programs (Burde, 2014). They believed that a fundamental change in education was important in the process of a democratic revolution in the country and so students received large amounts of information about communist beliefs and principles. Similarly, the Jihadi groups, as the resistance groups, used the school and education institutions as propaganda, encouraging people to join Islamic Jihadi Groups.

The Jihadi groups, with the support of the United States of America developed school textbooks disseminating violent messages against the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan government

and the Soviet Union (Corbo, 2019). The school textbooks in areas under the control of Jihadi groups were all about being Mujahidin the past, education was used as a tool to promote religious extremism and radicalization, which further exacerbated the conflict. However, in recent years, education has been used to promote peace, reconciliation and stability in Afghanistan. The Afghan government has implemented a number of education initiatives to address the conflict. These include the establishment of the Afghan Education and Training Commission (AETC) in 2005. The AETC was established to ensure that all Afghan citizens, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion or other background, have access to quality education. The AETC implemented a number of initiatives, such as providing scholarships and financial assistance to vulnerable communities, providing teacher training programs and improving literacy rates. In addition, the Afghan government has established the Ministry of Education which is responsible for the development of the country's education system (Robiolle, 2016). The Ministry of Education has implemented a number of reforms, such as the introduction of gender-inclusive curricula and the introduction of courses that focus on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Ministry of Education has also implemented programs that provide educational opportunities for Afghan refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups.

The Afghan government has also launched a number of initiatives to promote education and reconciliation between different ethnic and religious groups (Mulholland, 2022). These initiatives include the establishment of the National Commission for Peace and Reconciliation (NCPR) in 2017 and the National Education Policy in 2018. The NCPR was established to foster peace and reconciliation between different ethnic and religious groups, while the National Education Policy was designed to improve the quality of education in Afghanistan. These initiatives have been successful in promoting peace and reconciliation, as well as increasing access to quality education for all Afghans (Arooje, 2021). In addition, the Afghan government has implemented programs to provide vocational training for vulnerable communities, such as the National Vocational Education Program. This program has been successful in providing job opportunities for vulnerable communities, which has helped to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for these communities. Education has also been used to promote a sense of national identity in Afghanistan. The Afghan government has established a number of initiatives to promote a sense of national identity such as the National Education Policy.

Statement of the Problem

Education plays a key role in conflict management in Afghanistan. It is a critical component of the country's social, economic and political structure and is used to bring about peace and stability. Education is necessary for the development of a strong and capable government, and it is essential for the formation of a healthy and productive society. Education not only provides individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to make informed decisions and to participate in the development of the country but it also helps to create an environment in which people can work together and engage in constructive dialogue and debate. This study sought to explain why education is both a problem and an advantage in reducing and increasing conflicts in Afghanistan. The country has a long history of conflict and the educational system has often been a target during times of civil war. Many of the educational institutions have been destroyed or damaged and

teachers and students have often been forced to flee. Furthermore, the country's education system has been deeply affected by poverty, corruption and inequality. As a result, educational opportunities for many Afghans are limited and the quality of education available is often inadequate. Furthermore, the education system is largely underfunded, and there are significant gaps in access to education, particularly among girls and children in rural areas. One of the major challenges is the lack of resources. The education system is largely underfunded and there are significant gaps in access to education, particularly among girls and children in rural areas. Additionally, many of the country's educational institutions lack the resources and equipment necessary to provide a quality education, and teachers often lack the qualifications and training to teach effectively. Another challenge is the prevalence of corruption and mismanagement in the education system. This has resulted in a lack of accountability and a lack of transparency, which has made it difficult to ensure that the education system is able to contribute to peace and stability in the country.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study will benefit from the educational theory which was proposed by John Dewey (1894) and Cognitive Theory Jean Piaget (1936).

Educational Theory

Educational philosophy is concerned with the purpose of education. In this context, education is seen as a tool for promoting social justice and creating a more equitable society. Education is seen as a way of developing the skills necessary for living in a peaceful and just society. Education is also seen as a way of helping individuals to develop the skills necessary for resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner (Goode, 2014). Educational psychology is concerned with how people learn. It focuses on how people acquire knowledge, develop skills and form attitudes. Educational psychology is concerned with the development of cognitive, affective and social skills. These skills are necessary for understanding and managing conflict. Educational psychologists have identified several different learning theories that can be used to explain the role of education in conflict management.

Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory focuses on how people acquire and process information. According to this theory, learning is a process of acquiring and organizing information. People learn by forming mental representations of the world around them, and by forming associations between different pieces of information. (Beck, 2014). This theory can be used to explain the role of education in conflict management. Education can provide the information necessary for understanding and managing conflict. Education can also help to create the mental representations necessary for understanding the complex nature of conflict. This can help to create a better understanding of how different forms of conflict can be managed in a peaceful and constructive manner.

Empirical Review

Gbenga (2022) examined conflict resolution mechanisms in educational institutions. Descriptive survey design, was the methodology employed through a self-designed questionnaire to elicit data

from 200 respondents. The study found among others that there exist various types of conflict in educational institutions. Furthermore, the study identified the causes, consequences and forms of conflict management mechanisms

Zahid (2021) investigated organizational learning, psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior as mediators between emotional intelligence (EI) and conflict management. Data were collected from twelve educational institutes from Xi'an and Sichuan China. The survey was addressed to faculty members ranging from lecturers to professors, 513 questionnaires were collected with a response ratio of 57 percent. Hence, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to validate prescribed theoretical conjecture. The research found that direct link between EI and conflict management is significant. Organizational learning and innovative work behavior fully mediated the relationship while psychological empowerment is having no mediation between the two variables.

Rahayu (2020) illustrated and explained the application of conflict management in an increasing school effectiveness. The method used was qualitative approach to library research methods by analyzing related empirical findings that had been made and adding to the thinking of researchers as their contribution. The findings in this study was that conflict does not always have a negative impact on school life, but the existence of conflict can encourage creativity, adaptation and school innovation.

Yazdani (2020) evaluated three different approaches to education in Afghanistan. Illustrative statistics derived from summative or quantitative content analysis had also been used as the methodology for this research. This analysis found out that Afghanistan school textbooks from 1980 to 2002 (regime 1 and 2) were largely ideological support mechanisms for the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISAG), whereas textbooks that were developed from 2004 to 2014 under the Afghanistan Islamic Republic Government (AIRG), have somewhat met peace education objectives.

Nyang'au (2019) assessed the causes of ethnic conflict and effects on access and participation of children in primary school education and to find out the level at which ethnic inequalities affect access and participation of children in primary school education in Nakuru County. The study further used semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (version 23). The study found in part that there was discernible effect for ethnic conflicts on access and participation of pupils in primary education

Turk (2018) examined the effects of conflict resolution, peace education and peer mediation on the conflict resolution skills of students via meta-analysis method. 23 studies were determined to be in accordance with the study criteria. According to research findings conflict resolution, peace education and peer mediation education programs have a wide range of effect on the conflict resolution skills of students. In addition, the education program, education level, the type of application, publication type, the duration of application has been examined and evaluated

Jia (2017) analyzed conflict management strategies were adopted by administrators and faculty leaders in order to solve conflicts during consolidation. Based on 35 in-depth interviews with faculty, staff and administrators. The results showed how organizational culture, communication,

and conflict management strategies are closely connected with each other and can have a major impact on the merger process in higher education.

Lin (2016) examined a conflict management model in which students' customer orientation toward education affected their sense of academic entitlement, which led to different conflict management preferences. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypothesized mode. Results showed that students' customer-orientation influenced their academic entitlement and conflict preferences. Academically entitled students were more likely to engage in distributive bargaining and negotiate with their instructors for a compromise.

Ntide (2015) investigated how conflicts are managed by head teachers and teachers of primary schools in Tanzania with a particular reference to Temeke Municipality. Primary data was collected mainly through questionnaires from 11 headteachers and 11 teachers from 11 purposively sampled primary schools in Temeke Municipality. Overall, results of the study unveiled that conflicts exist in most of the studied primary schools; and conflicts were felt as both constructive and destructive by most head teachers, while most of teachers viewed the mas unhealthy for the wellbeing of schools. Respondents indicated that poor performance of both head teachers and teachers, differences in opinions among head teachers and teachers, management style of head teachers, differences in perceptions and favoritism are the main sources of conflicts that croup between head teachers and teachers of primary schools.

Sheldene (2014) provided a four-point rationale for teaching corporate crisis management as a module within a course on ethical decision-making in business and organizations. Participants also completed a survey on their perceptions of the crisis management module and its placement within the ethics course. Statistical analyses demonstrated significant knowledge acquisition on crisis/management; significant skill development on crisis recognition, evaluation and action planning; and significantly greater "true positives" and significantly fewer "false negatives" in post-course identification of crisis warning signs. Perceptions of the crisis management module and its placement within the course on ethical decision-making were positive

Chege (2014) established the extent to which violence; displacement, destruction of schools' physical facilities influences participation of girls in primary education in Samburu. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents, while collected data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The research findings revealed that majority of the respondents, 55.6 percent head teachers, 53.7 percent teachers and 72.9 percent pupils indicated that the area is affected by inter-tribal conflicts from time to time that interfere with the livelihoods of the residents. All the respondents indicated that girls in their schools had been attacked on their way to school, confirming the prevailing insecurity in Samburu County that is likely to influence girls' participation.

Kibe (2013) examined the content of peace education in relation to the state of peace education in Kenya and its transformative impact in Kenya since the post-election violence. To achieve the objectives and examine the research questions, the research adopted a methodology that is descriptive which uses both primary and secondary data by using books, interviews, questioners and focus group discussion hence allowing use of both qualitative and quantitative research

methods. The main finding of the study from the collected data is that peace education in Kenya has not been effective in addressing issues of equality, respect of cultural diversity and addressing fears to allow Kenyans live anywhere without fear. This implies that peace education should be made more effective in order to transform the Kenyan society in all aspects and nature a culture of peace.

Serap (2013) assessed the effectiveness of this school-based conflict resolution training program, designed to enhance students' conflict resolution skills and social competence and consequently decrease aggression. Three hundred and ninety-four elementary school students participated in the study. A pretest–posttest control group design was used. Results indicated that the conflict resolution training increased students' constructive conflict resolution skills and social competence and consequently decreased reactive and proactive aggression levels.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library

RESULTS

The results were grouped into various research gap categories namely as conceptual, methodological and geographical gap.

Conceptual Gaps

Studies by Gbenga (2022), Zahid (2021), Rahayu and Yazdani (2020), Nyang'au (2019), Turk (2018), Jia (2017), Lin (2016), Ntide (2015), Sheldene and Chege (2014), Kibe and Serap (2013) had conceptual framework gap in addition, all the mentioned studies did not establish the challenges of education on conflict management. The studies did not outline the challenges in a clear manner. Therefore, the current study seeks to address these conceptual gaps

Geographical Gap

Studies by Gbenga (2022), Zahid (2021), Rahayu (2020), Nyang'au (2019), Turk (2018), Jia (2017), Lin (2016), Ntide (2015), Sheldene and Chege (2014), Kibe and Serap (2013) had geographical gap because they were not conducted in Afghanistan. This implies that the results may be inapplicable in Afghanistan since the social economic environment of Afghanistan and other countries differ. The current study seeks to address this gap.

Methodological Gap

A methodological gap presents itself in this study, Gbenga (2022) examined conflict resolution mechanisms in educational institutions. Descriptive survey design, was the methodology employed through a self-designed questionnaire to elicit data from 200 respondents to analyze data while our study will use a desk study literature review methodology.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Education is a powerful tool that is be used to reduce conflict and create a more peaceful and equitable world. It is essential that all people have access to education, so that they gain the skills and knowledge they need to manage and resolve conflicts in a constructive way. Education can help to create an environment which is conducive to dialogue and understanding and is used to challenge existing structures of power and inequality, which are often at the root of conflicts. The scale of politicization and ideological influence on young people in schools, madrassas and universities seems to suggest that the future of Afghanistan's Western-backed liberal democracy is fragile and faces a serious threat of radicalization. Our study shows that educational institutions are increasingly falling in the trap of political extremism not only at the expense of children's right to gain quality education but also putting the long-term peace of the country in jeopardy. Children, teachers and educational officers face serious security threats from armed groups such as the Taliban and IS who reject modern education that aims to provide Afghan children with a global outlook, critical thinking and knowledge and skills to engage in economic activities in the era of globalisation. Education can serve as a fertile ground for cultivating radical ideas that terrorist activities can capitalize on. A good quality education has a prominent role in post-war peacebuilding especially in the long-term peace, development and social transformation.

Recommendations

The study recommends more research to review all current curriculum textbooks is needed and possibly research on textbooks in comparison to other countries' school textbooks would be helpful for the Ministry of Education to ensure quality education towards peace. Simply, there needs for more information on gender to be included in the textbooks. The idea of gender and education for girls and boys has been considered, but this also include a narrative on the importance of schooling for girls and boys or the inclusion of both boys and girls in education programs. It gives students further knowledge of gender equality and important roles for girls and boys and men and women, in a nation state and in the world. In this way the idea of gender should be operationalized into the book's content. More examples and exercises could be provided that bring to children's attention the place for girls in the education system, to cover the gender mind element. More integration of text relevant to all elements of peace education. It is necessary to operationalize peace education content into all school subject textbooks, not only Dari language and Algebra textbooks. It is essential to integrate information related to peace education in all possible subject textbooks.

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