

Nominal Group Technique: A Brainstorming Tool For Identifying Elements For Multicultural-Based Model Of Peace Education Curriculum For Preschool Children.

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ABSTRACT: Peace is an issue oftenly discussed lately these days, particularly which entails cultural diversity. Through education, peace could be delivered to all levels especially children as our future generation. This study aims to identify elements for multicultural-based model of peace education curriculum for preschool children. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of expert's conceptions on peace in multicultural-based model of education development and their beliefs about the best way to promote peace among preschool children, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to structure each focus group meeting. NGT findings show that 26 elements have been agreed by experts as rudimental in the multicultural-based model of peace education curriculum for preschool children.

KEYWORDS–Nominal Group Technique, Peace Education, Curriculum, Multicultural, Preschool Children

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I INTRODUCTION

Peace education is a vital component in quality education fundamentals. Peace education defines as a process that encourages knowledge, skills, attitude and crucial values in order to alter behavior [1, 2]. This will prevent children, youths and adults from the structure of conflicts and violence. It will further drives to conflict resolution in peaceful manner thus creating conducive environment for peace, either in the context of intrapersonal, interpersonal, groups, national or international.

Peace education is increasingly emphasized especially by peace researcher such as Betty Reardon [3] and Douglas Roche [4]. Harris and Synnott on the other hand assert peace education as a series of “teaching conference” attained from the desire for peace, the alternative to conflict resolution with no violence involved and critical analysis on structural measure that produces injustice and disparity [5].

Malaysia is a nation full of culture, race, religion and belief diversity. Realizing this matter, unity is the crucial element to develop a peace and prosper nation. In Malaysia context, unity as a concept towards achieving developed nation status is implemented all along. The very aspiration of its establishment and independence is based on peace and unity among the races in the effort of becoming developed and advanced nation align with world's progress.

Malaysia concept introduced by Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Abd Razak on 16th September 2010 has a very clear direction. This concept emphasize the importance of a united nation among the multi-racial citizens, coming from different race, background and religion for the benefits of future prosperity. In reaching this goal, aspiration values that should be the foundation of Malaysians lifestyle are needed. Even though these values are long inculcated, they still have to be emphasized for the progress of a better future of this nation. These values are based on the culture of excellence, perserverence, modesty, acceptance, loyalty, meritocracy, education and integrity [6]. Peace education in school is an important starting point in facing various challenges in future [7]. Therefore, providing children with balanced quality from all aspects should be done in securing their future. With respect to this matter, preparing the most suitable curriculum content is very crucial as it is the basis of a curriculum [8]. Consequently, the necessity of this study coincides with the purpose to develop children with peace for the benefits of themselves, community, environment, culture and the country.

II PURPOSE OF STUDY

This research aims to identify elements for multicultural-based model of peace education curriculum for preschool children based on experts opinion. The objectives are as follow:

1. To explore elements for multicultural-based model of peace education curriculum for preschool children.
2. To identify elements for multicultural-based model of peace education curriculum for preschool children.

III RESEARCH DESIGN

This exploratory study uses qualitative method to provide further understanding on the area being investigated. The use of qualitative method is appropriate for this study because it is an attempt to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective rather than the researcher's. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' conceptions on imagination in creativity development and their beliefs about the best way to promote imagination in the classroom, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to structure each focus group meeting [9]. NGT is a strategic and effective means of harnessing social facilitation processes so that group productivity on a given task is optimized [10]. Prior to an NGT meeting, it is important to understand the informational needs to be addressed along with this procedure. Once the objectives are well understood, focus should be given on structuring questions posed to the group because wordings and grammatical structure of the questions will affect the levels of abstraction, breadth, and depth of the elicited responses. According to Delbecq et al., broadly stated or unfocused NGT questions are likely to elicit a variety of responses from respondents who have had varied experiences [9]. Questions should be framed so that participants can generate information that sufficiently conveys their understanding of the issue under study.

1.1 NGT in Education Research

The NGT has been used in educational settings to investigate a wide range of topics, including characteristics of expert associate teachers [11], homework communication strategies in remedial education [12], primary teachers' beliefs about families' competence to contribute knowledge to their child's education [13], evaluation of one-to-one teaching in general practice [14], selecting topics for a BSN leadership course for Registered Nurses (RNs) [15], and occupational health nurses' perceptions of their education and training needs for the "new public health agenda" [16].

IV SAMPLING

The samples involved in this phase are known as homogeny. Homogeneous samples have similarities in experience, culture and field of work [17]. Thus, sampling process in this phase is according to similar attributions exist in experts related to discussion topic of this study [18]. This type of sample is applied purposely to elude domination by certain parties influenced by their greatly distinct background and knowledge factors.

Accordingly, selection of the right experts is vital to the success of this study since the outcomes are based on their opinions and viewpoints [19, 20]. Dalkey and Helmer defines expert as individual with knowledge in certain fields [21]; meanwhile Adler and Ziglio emphasize the selection of experts must be based on these four expertise prerequisites: i) knowledge and experience pertaining the issues being studied; ii) capability and willingness to participate; iii) having ample and sufficient time to participate; and iv) effective communication skill [22].

Besides, the number of experts involved in this study is a crucial issue and needs to be taken seriously. Hogarth asserts how factors such as group size and panel expertise may affect the validity of the outcomes [23]. Armstrong states that the group of panel need to be between 5 to 20 people [24]. According to Pastrana the ideal size of a group is normally between 6 to 12 people [25]. Boje and Murnighan however argue there is no significant differences in the result's effectiveness for group with members of 3, 7 or 11 people [26]. Based on the probability formula, $n(n-1)$, n as the number of participant, the probability of communication among the participant will greatly increase along with the increase in the number of participant. For instance, if there is six (6) members in the panel group, thus the probability of communication among them is $6(6-1) = 30$. However, with the addition of four (4) members in the same group, the probability of communication will fluctuate to $10(10-1) = 90$. This situation will require the members to discuss more elements coming out from each of them and causing the members to dissipate faster. Consequently, it will turn down the individual participation and involvement as well as their motivation to carry on with the discussion. However, in this study, eight (8) experts from various expertise related to the study were selected. These designated experts are meant to fulfill the study's requirement of multi-background experts to ensure high validity. The experts' profile is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: NGT experts profile

NO.	POSITION	EXPERTISE FIELD	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
1.	Senior Lecturer	Curriculum (Curriculum Development)	15 years
2.	Senior Lecturer	Preschool Education (Contents)	14 years
3.	Lecturer	Children Early Education (Contents)	11 years
4.	Senior Lecturer	Multicultural (Contents)	13 years
5.	Lecturer	Peace Studies (Contents)	10 years
6.	Lecturer	Curriculum (Curriculum Development), Preschool Education (Contents)	16 years
7.	Teacher	Preschool (Executive)	20 years
8.	Teacher	Preschool (Executive)	18 years

V DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Nominal group technique (NGT) is a structured variation of a small-group discussion to reach consensus. NGT gathers information by asking individuals to respond to questions posed by a moderator, and later ask the participants to prioritize ideas or suggestions of all the group members. The process prevents the discussion from being dominated by a single member, encourages all group members to participate, and produces result in a set of prioritized solutions or recommendations that represent the group's preferences.

NGT is a good method to achieve group consensus, for example, when various people (program staff, stakeholders, community residents, etc.) are involved in constructing a logical model and the list of outputs for a specific component is too lengthy therefore the list has to be prioritized. In this case, the questions to be considered are: "Which of our outputs listed are the most important for easier goal achievement and easier measurement? Which of our outputs are less important that make us difficult to achieve our goal and make it more difficult for us to measure?"

1.2 Nominal Group Technique

5.1.1 Generating Ideas

The moderator presents questions or problem to the group in written form and reads the question to the group. The moderator directs everyone to write ideas in brief phrases or statements and asks them to work silently and independently. Each person silently generates ideas and writes them down.

5.1.2 Recording Ideas

Group members engage in a round-robin feedback session to concisely record each idea (without debate at this point). The moderator writes an idea from a group member on a flip chart that is visible to the entire group, and proceeds to ask for another idea from the next group member, and the process continues. Repeat of ideas is unnecessary; however, if the group members feel that a particular idea provides different emphasis or variation, they are free to include the idea. The process is carried out until ideas of all the group members have been documented.

5.1.3 Discussing Ideas

Each recorded idea is later discussed to determine clarity and importance. For each idea, the moderator asks, "Are there any questions or comments that group members would like to make about the item?" This step provides an opportunity for members to express their understanding of the logic and the relative importance of the item. The creator of the idea need not feel obliged to clarify or explain the item; any member of the group can play that role.

5.1.4 Voting on Ideas

Individuals vote privately to prioritize the ideas. The votes are tallied to identify the ideas that are rated highest by the group as a whole. The moderator establishes what criteria are used to prioritize the ideas.

VI FINDINGS

Findings were obtained from 8 experts involved throughout the NGT process. This process uses one set of seven Likert scale questionnaires that consists of 16 activities sorted from previous literature review and need analysis. The activities are as follows.

- a. Knowing the concept of self peace awareness.
- b. Understand the needs of peace surrounding and the awareness towards others.
- c. Understand the needs of environmental peace and concept of love the nature.
- d. Understand the needs of intercultural peace and global awareness.
- e. Understand the concept of problem and conflict resolution.
- f. Mastering the skills of bearing responsibility.
- g. Love and appreciate own self.

- h. Creating positive self-image.
- i. Fostering positive self-identity.
- j. Evaluating similarities and differences.
- k. Appreciate and understand others' feelings.
- l. Disclose feelings, information and experience.
- m. Understand other people's self-value.
- n. Improving awareness on nature's concerns.
- o. Appreciate and preserve the nature.
- p. Preserve global prosperity and awareness.
- q. Inculcate equality and justice values.
- r. Concern about the lives of others.
- s. Favor of conducive environment that leads to peace.
- t. Create a just future.
- u. Resolving conflicts peacefully.
- v. Affection
- w. Helping each other
- x. Trustable
- y. Justice
- z. Common good

The experts need to choose their agreement level on all of the activities listed. Next, the total of agreement level by the experts for each activity is calculated to determine the activity ranking that need to be carried out first. The total approval is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Elements Position And Priority Based on NGT

NO.	ELEMENTS	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	TOTAL	PRIORITY
1	Knowing the concept of self peace awareness (self control)	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	39	2
2	Knowing the needs of peace surroundings (community, family and peers)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	1
3	Knowing the needs to environmental peace and concept of love the nature	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	38	3
4	Knowing the needs of intercultural peace and global awareness	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	37	4
5	Knowing problem solution concept involving own self and peers	3	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	35	6
6	Able to bear responsibility	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	35	6
7	Appreciate own self	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	37	4
8	Highlighting positive self-image	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	39	2
9	Building nation's ethos (positive sense of identity)	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	37	4
10	Respect similarities and differences	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	39	2
11	Appreciate and understand other people's feelings	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	37	4
12	Able to disclose feelings, information and experience	2	5	4	5	4	2	5	5	32	7
13	Understand other people's self-value	3	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	35	6
14	Increase awareness on public affairs	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	38	3
15	Appreciate mother nature	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	38	3
16	Express concern on global peace awareness	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	39	2
17	Inculcate equality and justice values	2	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	35	6
18	Concern about the lives of others	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	36	5
19	Favor of conducive environment that leads to peace	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	38	3
20	Desire of a peaceful future	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	38	3
21	Resolving conflicts peacefully	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	39	2
22	Apply divine concept in life	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	38	3
23	Develop affection towards other peoples	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	1
24	Develop attitude of helping one another	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	38	3
25	Develop trustable senses	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	39	2
26	Develop spirit of tolerance	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	39	2

Note : E = Expert

Table 3 shows a list of activities that have been sorted according to ranking as determined by the experts.

Table 3:List of Elements After the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) Process

ELEMENTS	POSITION
Knowing the needs of peace surroundings (community, family and peers)	1
Develop affection towards other peoples	2
Knowing the concept of self peace awareness (self control)	3
Highlighting positive self-image	4
Respect similarities and differences	5
Express concern on global peace awareness	6
Resolving conflicts peacefully	7
Develop trustable senses	8
Develop spirit of tolerance	9
Knowing the needs to environmental peace and concept of love the nature	10
Increase awareness on public affairs	11
Appreciate mother nature	12
Favor of conducive environment that leads to peace	13
Desire of a peaceful future	14
Apply divine concept in life	15
Develop attitude of helping one another	16
Knowing the needs of intercultural peace and global awareness	17
Appreciate own self	18
Building nation's ethos (positive sense of identity)	19
Appreciate and understand other people's feelings	20
Concern about the lives of others	21
Knowing problem solution concept involving own self and peers	22
Able to bear responsibility	23
Understand other people's self-value	24
Inculcate equality and justice values	25
Able to disclose feelings, information and experience	26

VII CONCLUSION

Application of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) in Malaysia's academic field is still uncommon, despite its proven practicality in promptly bringing together experts' ideas and opinions. This method of leveraging experts to achieve consensus among them has long been used especially in relation to brand-new and breakthrough findings. With relevant experts in the field of the study congregated, the concurrence of idea and opinions generated during NGT session is highly valued as main information in the study.

Findings from the experts' opinions shown 26 elements has been chosen by the group during NGT session. The elements were selected considering several factors namely knowledge, skills, value and attitude shown before, during and after the implementation of this model. Consequently, selection and decision were made based on religion, culture and the children's living environment. Preschool period is when the appropriation of developing individuals for their future takes place, whether from personality, morality or conscience aspects [27]. The concept of God in life, or divine, is very crucial to instill in children. They would be able to learn every knowledge presented if they can grasp this concept. It is important for them to know and understand themselves on this earth and the role they need to do.

Once the elements has been well comprehended, only then they can move on to the next element which is self-appreciation. When children started to understand why they were born and the purpose in this world, they would subsequently would appreciate themselves more. They would then started to develop the next element – nation's ethos. Nation's ethos can be defined as character or nature of a race or culture. As soon as the children able to develop nation's ethos, it means they already know to understand and appreciate other people's feelings. With the understanding and appreciation exist within themselves, they would then begin to shape out the attitude of helping each other. In the next element, children would begin to discover personal peace awareness (self-control) especially in a bigger group. It is easier for children to learn self-control when a conflict arises, such as a fight, when they have been inculcated with the five elements before. When children is able to self-control, the elements are moving on to a selection of 11 elements. Children can be instilled with either one, multiple or all elements within this group decided by the teachers; knowing the needs of peace surroundings (community, family and peers), develop affection value, respect similarities and differences, develop trust senses, appreciation towards nature, favoring conducive environment that leads to peace, knowing the needs of intercultural peace and global awareness, knowing problem solution concept involving self and peers, able to bear responsibility, understand other people's self-value and inculcate equality and justice values.

After the elements from the previous group were decided, progress of elements implementation move on to next group, which is accentuate positive self-image and develop spirit tolerance elements. Children with high control of knowledge, attitude, skills and peace value are able to create inner positive aura. Positive image is important to promote positive surroundings. Besides that, they can develop spirit of tolerance for themselves and their surroundings as well.

Resulting from the existed positive image and tolerance, children are prone to care for other people and capable to share their feelings, information and experience with others. This would raise children who are able to show concern for global peace awareness, know the needs to environmental peace and concept of love to nature and able to raise awareness on public affairs.

Based on the application mastery of all the elements above, the outcome will produce children with ability to resolve any conflict peacefully and desire for a peace future. Children who follow this model implementation will not just realize their role and responsibility as caliph in this world, but will further know their role as future leader who is capable to improve current situation towards unity, peace and harmony. Besides that, they are able to nurture themselves to become a better person with high sense of peace, excellence, glorious and holistic.

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