

Hitotsubashi University undergraduates' belief in the possibility of world peace: Research on peace consciousness from a social psychological perspective.

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What psychological factors do people, as actors in the peace movement, need to possess in order to remove war and conflict from the world permanently? This study focused on the belief that it is possible to rid the planet of war and conflict forever, in other words, that world peace is a possibility. Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator, which is operated by the National Institute of Informatics, was used to search empirical studies about peace consciousness published in Japan, and these studies were reviewed. This search revealed that research items concerning peace consciousness from a psychological point of view are few, and that the studies that do exist mainly examine the political and/or historical aspects of peace consciousness. From an examination of the psychological aspects of peace consciousness in preceding studies, it seemed clear that the hope for peace should be studied more, and that the belief in the possibility that war and conflict could be ended forever had not been looked at directly. In addition, it was realized that studies which examined the relationships between these variables of peace consciousness and other variables (determinants) were few, and deficient in certain areas. Based on these considerations, a survey of undergraduates of Hitotsubashi University was conducted and analyzed; it inquired into belief in the possibility of world peace and examined the correlates of such belief, especially social psychological variables (social relationship factors and psychological factors). The results regarding belief in world peace tended to be pessimistic overall. Belief in the possibility of world peace was significantly linked to political and historical aspects of peace consciousness (i.e. interest in the Iraq War and interest in the Asia-Pacific War, respectively). I conducted a multiple regression analysis predicting belief in the possibility of world peace, and found that self-efficacy, the importance of personal relationships, neoliberalism, a sense of belonging to the local community, to the Asian region, and to the world as a whole, had significant effects on that belief. These results were discussed in reference to research in peace psychology.