MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY

By

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PROVOST

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of teachers, K-8th grade concerning multicultural concepts in order to better understand society and develop harmony among people.

A research study of multicultural diversity was conducted to determine the relationship among people of awareness, attitudes and behaviors of males, females and ethnic groups. A questionnaire was given to twenty-eight teachers. The researcher designed the questionnaire.

The Literature Review was centered on six concerns. They are Society Problems, Religion Problems, Homosexual Problems, Elderly Problems, Homeless Problems and Solutions.

A questionnaire was developed containing 16 close-ended questions, and distributed to 28 elementary school teachers in the Sierra Vista School of Roosevelt School District in Phoenix, Arizona. This population was selected because it represented a wide variety of diverse nationalities, and lent itself to analysis of a multicultural situation. The questionnaire examined the teachers' perception, concerning multicultural concepts in an attempt to better understand society and develop harmony among people.

The teachers, who took this questionnaire, were able to answer 16 questions in a close-ended survey, that relates to the teachers environment and work place. In giving their response, it helped determine the effect if has in relationship with others.

Results of the questionnaire demonstrated a wide variety of responses concerning

society's role in meeting needs, the affect of religion, the affect of homosexuality, the affect on the elderly, and the affect on the homeless. The predominant groups in this study were Afro-American, and Females, encompassing, four general ethnic groupings.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Issues concerning race have been a problem in the 20th century. No matter what color one is, one will often find racial situations in the workplace, neighborhood and church. Educators and social theorists have analyzed current racial issues as they apply to diversity and equal rights. Toward the end of the 20th century the trend was for society to develop unity and understanding of one another through multiculturalism.

Harassment is an issue that has been discussed for a long time. In America, laws have been issued throughout the country to punish people who harass others because of race. Across the world, America has been viewed as a country that is not able to handle harassment problems well because many harassment issues are not answered or settled.

America needs to find a solution to this problem because children need to live without it. No matter who the people are people need to respect one another to show our children that the world is a place where one can live without fear.

Technology has become one of the biggest communication tools in America. But even with technology, the U.S. Society is still not changing rapidly enough with the issue of improving relationship toward each other. The U.S. Society has been on this course for a long time. Action needs to be taken to better educate our society so like issues of harassment will be reduced or eliminated. Once we can resolve this matter positively, we can proceed together better as a society.

Development of the Problem

In America there are hate groups that cause crimes across the country. Many people have been placed in prison because of this action. This attitude of hate is visible in schools as well. There needs to be a solution to hatred so that all can live in harmony.

Need for Study

Multiculturalism is the state of have or blending many distinct cultures from various parts of the country. Many different backgrounds, which are not limited to language, culture and ethnic background, are brought together with the various groups of people. In the United States we have people from various parts of the world that bring their traditions and religions with them. There is a need to better understand this diversity if there is to be harmony among people (Gollnick and Chinn, 1994). In school systems, the perception of teacher towards multiculturalism is important because they often serve as examples to students and others in society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine perceptions of teachers, Kindergarten – 8th grade, concerning multicultural concepts, in order to better understand diversity and develop harmony among people.

Research Question

How can we examine multicultural issues in the 21st century and develop a more positive

harmonious society?

Definition of Terms

Race - the zoological division of the human population having common origin and other

physical traits, such as hair form and pigmentation; a group of people having such common

characteristics or appearances; people united by a common nationality. (Webster's Dictionary

1993, p.1060)

Multicultural – form of civilization, beliefs, arts and many customs. (Webster's

Dictionary 1993, p.776)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents information concerning six social issues, which are involved in society. The issues include: Society Problems, Religion Problems, Homosexual Problems, Elderly Problems, Homeless Problems, and Solutions.

Society Problems

Merton and Nisbet (1971) have explored two approaches leading to the problems in our society today.

The study of social problems requires an understanding of the conditions that create these problems (Merton and Nisbet 1971, p.24).

Society problems that involve drug abuse, pollution, mental illness, and value conflict. Butler stated, "Urban problems are what people think they are. Thus, only conditions defined by people are problems" (Butler 1997, p.3).

Society is having problems with issues on race, and culture that occur day by day. This should not be surprising. Today's people are more afflicted with anxiety and uncertainty over race that over other social or political issues. "Time and time again what has been defined as "The Race Problem" has generated ferocious antagonism" (Rodgier 1991, p.345).

Religion Problems

America has many religious groups whose culture includes religion as part of their ethnic identify. Religious experiences involve total life for many people. It is not surprising

that religious experiences are intimately connected with ethnic cultural life (Kilbride, Cozdaleaud, Ameisen 1990, p.223).

A problem with religion is how Americans view it for believers and non-believers. Among the concerns is whether or not religion is a cultural inheritance from generation to generation.

It is critical to acknowledge at the outset that religion cannot be taken without serious consideration for children's rights to accept, modulate or reject views and belief systems inherited from parents (Coulby, Gujndara, and Jones 1997, p.19).

In America, religion is an issue. Two crucial views in America are secularism and religion, and how they relate to society, involving civic rights and heritage. Religion in the United States is separated from the laws of the state.

The development of a civic religion was a way by which two crucial themes of American cultural and social history could be combined. The other theme is important in the building of the kingdom of God on Earth. The establishment of the new American nation was a culmination of this process. Independence and a new constitution conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal were developments that could fail to carry a religious dimension. This took a form that is relatively consistent with traditional Christian conceptions and definitions, and it is this that is the core of what Bella calls the American civil religion (Parsons 1978). There was no radical break with the primary religious heritage.

Religious pluralism has festered the rapid accommodation of many American religious movements toward a mainstream of acceptability and respectability by society. Those other than Protestants, Catholics and Jews, smaller groups that maintain their distinctiveness

historically have been victims of harassment by members of mainstream religious groups. Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Children of God, and the Unification Church are minority groups that have been subjected to such treatment in the past (Appel, as cited in Gollnick & Chinn, 1994).

Conflict among the three major faiths has also been intense at different periods in our history. Anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic sentiments are still perpetuated in some households and institutions in this country. Religious pluralism in our past has often led to conflict (Gollnick & Chinn 1994, p.189).

Homosexual Community Problems

The gender of a person in today's world is acceptable; be they male or female. The homosexuals are not considered as a separated race, but they do ask for respect, equal rights and to be accepted in society. Homosexual students in high school are having a tough time with peers once they open up and say who they are. Educators are dealing with hidden gay and lesbian students as well as gay and lesbian parents (Edward 1997).

In 1997, statistics show the percentage of the homosexual users of alcohol and drugs, the amount of violence experienced in the family, from peers and from strangers, as well as the number of youth suicides. Twenty-six percent of gay men and 83% of lesbians report using alcohol and other drugs on a regular basis. Forty-one percent of lesbian gay youth suffer violence from their families, peers, and strangers. As a result, it is estimated that 30% of youth suicides are committed by lesbian and gay people (Edward 1997, p.40). As part of teacher certification, a course in suicide should be required (as cited in Besner and Spungin 1995).

In 1993, Massachusetts Governor's Commission for Homosexual Youth (as cited in Berdt & Box, 1993) published a document recommending the following:

1.   Anti-discrimination policies, which include sexual orientation for students and teachers.

2.   Policies that guarantee equal access to education and school activities.

3.   Anti-harassment policies and guidelines, which deal with handling incidents of anti-gay language, harassment or violence.

4.   Multi-cultural and diversity policies (p. 3)

The Horizon Center for Homosexuals and People with AIDS as disease and safe-sex prevention is included in all of Horizon education program, and information is available to the community. Most recently, the state of Illinois AIDS hotline was brought to Horizon as well. A general telephone service staffed by volunteers constitutes the "directory" of Chicago. Answers are provided to people with questions about AIDS. Responses are offered to the cries for help of youth coming out, and information is available to out-of-town gay tourists looking for a good time (Herdt and Box 1993).

Elderly Problem

The majority of elderly in the United States are placed in Nursing Homes. The aged in society feel they have lost some of their privileges. Some privileges they once had are no longer a part of their world, such as visiting family, friends and attending church (Rose 1962, p.124).

In Jacob's 1978 case study he examines a retirement, community, and its life in society, and includes recommendations on the existing urban settings. Jacob's recommendation is that

efforts be made to integrate retirement communities into exiting urban settings (Jacobs, George, and Spinder 1978).

As of January 2000, society has caregivers to help the elderly. Some caregivers are children and grandchildren who assume the supporter role of caring for the aged. For years the care giving process has been intergenerational; the children or grandchildren have assumed the role of primary caregiver. Today, there is a need for innovative programs; ideas, that give care, support, and respite for these caregivers (Jo Horne 1985).

Homeless Problems

There are families out on the street unable to manage for themselves. They are minus or without financial means, and do not have a house that they can call home. Economics has been a problem for people who are not working and have been homeless many years. It is a struggle not only to generate an infusion of jobs from the outside, but also to promote the viability and expansion of existing businesses within the community (Schwarz and Volgy 1992, p.108-109).

Today, children are suffering because their parents are in poverty lines, and are homeless. The numbers keep rising. One-third of these homeless children will grow up in poverty in the United States (as cited in Nunez, 1994). Sadly, poverty has clamed America's children as its greatest victims. Today children are more likely to be poor than members of any other age group. Current estimates project that one in three American children will be poor for at least a year before turning age sixteen. The number of children living in poverty soared by more than three million in the 1980s outpacing the overall population growth of children in the United States. By 1993, one in every four children under the age of six was poor. Children in the cities face the harshest situations. Nearly one-third will grow up in poverty. According to

the Children's Defense Fund, the child poverty rate in this country is now at least double that of other developed nations (as cited in Nunez 1994). University of Missouri Sociologist, Kay Young McChesney (cited in Harms, Rag & Rolandell, 1993) has identified four basic types of families:

1. Families in which the primary breadwinner, usually a former blue-collar worker in a declining industry, is unemployed. A significant number of these families have moved from the Rust Belt to the West, where they can be found under expressway ramps living in tents or automobiles.

2. Single mothers with children, who have recently left relationships with men on whom they were economically dependent.

3. Long-term welfare recipients who are mothers for more than 10 years unable to pay their rent.

4. Young mothers who are formerly homeless teenagers.

To these four categories can be added two others:

5. Young mothers who have lived with their families of origin and have never lived independently. Frequently, the birth of a baby leads them to return to their families.

6. Political and Economic Refugees who lack legitimate access to public benefits. (Harms, Ray and Rolandell 1998, p.8)

Solution

A culture is associated with a common set of shared beliefs and values among its members. These orientations are reflected not only in the behavior of individuals, but in

societal organizations and their functionings. A bias toward certain core societal values however, still exists in the orientations of individuals, in particular across different segments of the social structure. A culture is not fixed and unchanging. It corresponds to a dynamic system, modified by trends and events across history. Yet, it preserves some constancy in its outward forms and central values over time. It may share some characteristics with other cultures, but have other characteristics that are unique to it (Feather 1975, p.195).

In a school's culture, the elite statue group tends to remain as a dominant group. In hierarchical societies schools are likely to be of the privileged classes only, and therefore concerned with teaching the culture of that elite group. As the educational system becomes democratized and gradually thrown open to a wider selection of pupils, this association of the schools with the culture of the elite status group tend to remain, so the school functions to acculturate their pupils to the culture of their dominant group (Sugarman 1973, p.17-18).

The solution to the problems may be found in education known as multiculturalism. Teachers in schools to help teach multiculturalism students understand and learn about countries, different culture, and beliefs. Education unites people together by allowing them to know various languages, races, aged lifestyles, and economic levels across the countries.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of teachers, Kindergarten – 8th grade, concerning multicultural concepts, in order to better understand diversity and develop harmony among people.

Research Design

The design of this study is a descriptive study that measures the perceptions of cultural issues. The central focus of descriptive research is to examine facts about people, their opinions and attitudes. Its purpose is not to give value to sets of relationship between events, but simply to draw attention to the degree two events or phenomena are related (Merriam and Simpson 1995). The questionnaire to gather teachers' perceptions was administered at Sierra Vista School in the Roosevelt School District in Phoenix, Arizona. The questionnaire was composed of 16 close-ended questions.

Population in the Study

There were 28 teachers that were given the evaluation questionnaire. The people that were involved were 7 Hispanics (1 male and 6 females), 15 African Americans (all females), 1 Lebanese (female), 1 Oriental (male), and 4 Anglo-Americans (1 male and 3 females).

Assumptions and Limitations

All 28 questionnaire-surveys were given out and all 28 came back. It is assumed that all teachers responded honestly. It is also assumed that all questions were completely understood and uniformly meaningful. The limitations of the survey include questioning only 28 members of the education profession, in an inner-city school system. Results from the survey may not necessarily be generalized to other situations. Another limitation was that 25 of the 28 teachers surveyed were women and therefore, not representative of the general population.

Instrumentation

Several books of surveys were examined in the development of the questionnaire. Demographic questions were asked concerning the teacher's gender. There were a total of 16 study questions that were close-ended.

Procedure

Twenty-eight questionnaires were handed out, one to each teacher at Sierra Vista Elementary School. The researcher explained what the questionnaire was about and that it involved a master research project. The questionnaires were completed and returned within 15 minutes. There was no collaboration among the participants. The questionnaires were placed in a manila envelope. The number of yes and no responses for the close-ended questions compiled each question.

Method of Analysis

Comparisons of the frequency of responses were made using the number of yes and no responses, for the close-ended questions. Similarities and differences were determined from responses.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The questionnaire was given to Sierra Vista Elementary School on December 5, 1999. The Survey was returned in 15 minutes at the school. There were 3 males, 25 females: 14 Afro-American, 7 Hispanic, 4 Anglo-American, 1 Lebanese, and 1 Oriental. The questionnaire was made of 16 close-ended questions. The questions and responses are listed below. Respondents are categorized by gender (3 males, and 25 females) and ethnicity.

1. Do you think that society has treated you fairly?

	Yes	No
Male	1	2
Female	10	15
Afro American		15
Anglo	3	1
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

The results of the majority responses were that society had not treated them fairly. The ethnic group responses were all Afro-Americans voted No; all Hispanics voted Yes.

2. What is your ethnic group?

	Total	Males	Females
Afro American	15	1	15
Anglo	4	1	3
Hispanic	7	1	6
Other	2	1	1

The predominant ethnic group in this study was Afro-American, and females out numbered males 25:3.

3. Do you think society has met your needs for life?

	Yes	No
Male	3	
Female	16	9
Afro-American	15	
Anglo		4
Hispanic	7	2
Other	1	1

The majority vote was yes for males and females. All males and majority of the females

voted that society has met their needs for life. All Afro-American voted yes, while all Anglos

voted no.

4. Are you pleased with today's life styles?

	Yes	No
Male		3
Female		25
Afro-American		15
Anglo		4
Hispanic		7
Other		2

All teachers responded NO when asked if they were pleased with today's life styles.

5. Are you religious?

	Yes	No
Male	3	
Female	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	4	
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

All teachers perceived themselves to be religious.

6. Are you satisfied with your local religious denomination?

	Yes	No
Male	2	1
Female	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	3	1
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

All but 1 Anglo male were satisfied with their religion.

7. Do you approve of homosexuals in society?

	Yes	No
Male		3
Female		25
Afro-American		15
Anglo		4
Hispanic		7
Other		2

None of the teachers approve of the homosexual lifestyle in society.

8. Are you willing to work with homosexuals?

	Yes	No
Male	3	
Female	18	7
Afro-American	10	5
Anglo	3	1
Hispanic	6	1
Other	2	

All males were willing to work with homosexuals, while some of the women were not.

9. Do you think the elderly should live in society

	Yes	No
Males	3	
Female	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	4	
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

Every teacher voted yes, that elderly should live in society.

10. Are today's Care Centers Acceptable for the elderly?

	Yes	No
Males		3
Females		25
Afro-American		15
Anglo		4
Hispanic		7
Other		2

All of the teachers voted NO concerning the Care Center being acceptable for the elderly.

11. Are you looking forward to becoming old?

	Yes	No
Males		3
Females		25
Afro- American		15
Anglo		4
Hispanic		7
Other		2

No one is looking forward to becoming old.

12. Do you think homeless people need to live in society?

	Yes	No
Males	3	
Females	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	4	
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

All were in favor that homeless people should live in society.

13. Do you think that homeless children should live the homeless parents?

	Yes	No
Males	3	
Females	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	4	
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

All the teachers votes yes, that homeless children should live with their homeless parents.

14. Do you have thoughts on society

	Yes	No
Males	3	
Females	25	
Afro-American	15	
Anglo	4	
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

It was unanimous that all teachers had thoughts on society.

15. If you have a choice, would you live in today's world

	Yes	No
Males	3	
Females	17	8
Afro-American	8	7
Anglo	3	1
Hispanic	7	
Other	2	

The majority of the teachers were willing to live in today's world, while the minority was not.

16. Are you male or female?

	Total	Male	Female
Afro American	15		15
Anglo	4	1	3
Hispanic	7	1	6
Other	2	1	1

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of teachers, K-8th grade concerning multicultural concepts in order to better understand society and develop harmony among people.

The Literature Review was centered on six concerns. They are: Society Problems, Religion Problems, Homosexual Problems, Elderly Problems, Homeless Problems and Solutions.

A questionnaire was developed containing 16 closed ended questions, and distributed to 28 elementary school teachers in Sierra Vista School, of the Roosevelt School District in Phoenix, Arizona. This population was selected because it represented a wide variety of diverse nationalities, and lent itself to analysis of a multicultural situation.

Conclusions

Results of the questionnaire demonstrated a wide variety of responses. The teachers surveyed generally:

1. Most teachers felt that society has not treated them fairly.
2. The predominant ethnic group in this study was Afro-American, and females out-numbered the males 25:3.
3. The majority felt that society ahs met their life needs
4. No Teacher was pleased with today's life style.
5. All teacher perceived themselves to be religious
6. All but 1 male was satisfied with their religion.
7. None of the teachers approve of the homosexual lifestyle in society.
8. In general most teachers voted that elderly should live in society.
9. Every teacher voted that elderly should live in society.
10. All teachers felt that care centers were not acceptable for the elderly.
11. No one is looking forward to becoming old.
12. All were in favor that homeless people should live in society.
13. All agreed that homeless children should live with their parents.

14. All teachers had thoughts on society.
15. Most teachers want to live in today's world.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a survey like this should be given every 3 years at ones place of employment. By the answers that people give, one may understand how to relate to them.

A Survey like this will help examine ones environment.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE I

This survey is for a Thesis Program from Elizabeth Jennings, who is attending Ottawa University.

<center>(PLEASE CIRCLE)</center>

1. Do you think that society has treated you fairly?
    Yes or No

2. What is your ethnic group?

3. Do you think society has met your needs for life?
    Yes or No

4. Are you please with today's life style?
    Yes or No

5. Are you religious?
    Yes or No

6. Are you satisfied with our local religious domination?
    Yes or No

7. Do you approve of homosexuals in society?
    Yes or No

8. Are you willing to work with homosexuals?
    Yes or No

9. Do you think the elderly should live in society?
    Yes or No

10. Are today's Care Centers Acceptable for the elderly?
    Yes or No

11. Are you looking forward to becoming old?
    Yes or No

12. Do you think homeless people need to live in society?
    Yes or No

13. Do you think that homeless children should live with homeless parent?
    Yes or No

14. Do you have thoughts on society?
    Yes or No

15. If you had a choice, would you live in today's world?
      Yes or No

16. Are you male or female?
      Yes or No

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