
Cultural Diversity

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Tirana, Albania.E-mail: isaerbas@gmail.com**Abstract**

The concept of human cultural diversity is to accept and respect each other. That means each individual is unique, he or she should understand and recognize the individual differences. The differences might be race, political implications of ethnicity, gender, economic status, nations, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or any other ideologies. The cultural variation emerges from the ethnic identity. It is a discovery of such differences in a safe, positive, and real environment. People should understand each other and go beyond simple tolerance and embrace and respect the rich cultural diversity, ethnicity and various cultures that each individual maintains. It should be focused on living together with different ethnicity in one place. But these differences all lie in the modern political and intellectual competition. The differences come from the historical background. It is believed that diverse groups bring different perception, understanding and creation to the culture.

The topic of cultural diversity creates one of the most important issues in the world today, and the issue promises to continue to the next century. The cultural groupings make the whole culture in a country. People should be taught in order to develop and increase their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures. It is very clear that every culture, race and ethnicity makes an important contribution to the society. Toward promoting inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect for diverse cultures are essential in order to build new bridges among people.

This paper begins by defining cultural diversity and advantages of cultural diversity. The paper uses quantitative method with survey questionnaire. The structured questionnaire has been used to collect data and asked teachers and the students from different countries. The paper uses content analysis in this part within the frame work of the qualitative method. The respondents have quite diverse backgrounds which is very important to have a wider perspective.

During the whole research and after the completion of the research, the researcher should abide by the ethical code of The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The SPSS 20, and the Nvivo10 were used to find and analyse the collected data.

The results of this study show that there have been diverse views regarding the term cultural diversity. It has been found out that the teachers and students have not been quite comfortable and positive regarding the cultural diversity.

Role of cultural diversity has been discussed and suggested that children, starting from the very early age, should be taught to live and interact with different race and ethnicity for the promising future.

Keywords: ethnicity, diversity, identity, society, interaction.

Introduction

Culture and cultural diversity create one of the most vital social issues in the world. Its role is not clearly understood in people's lives today. There are some reasons why it is not clearly understood. When cultural diversity is mentioned immediately it comes to mind, ethnicity, color, religions etc.

The aim of this paper is to provide discussions of the basic concepts, understandings, developing awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in the world today. The states and communities need to develop some appreciation, awareness and strategies in order to address problems and solve the problems of cultural diversity successfully. Permanent cultural diversity stability is very important to reserve peace among nations. Cultural diversity must be conducive to peace within countries, between regions, and also throughout the world. Sharing experiences, investigating the concept of cultural diversity in the face of globalization is very essential for world peace. Cultures enable people share experiences among communities.

This paper examines cultures, cultural diversity and advantages of cultural diversity.

Literature Review

As a positive and intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity is an essential element for culturally diverse societies. There is no culture which is perfect, but we can learn something from each culture and we can contribute something to each culture. Every day practices of social interaction can help cultures grow.

There is a question that needs to be answered. What does cultural diversity mean? Cultural diversity means according to Naylor: "an addressing cultural diversity, other ideas and terms immediately come to mind prejudice, racism, discrimination, and minority" (Naylor, 1997, p. 1). According to Lott: "culture refers to what we learn from others in the form of familiar associations or interpretations, beliefs, attitudes, and values" (Lott, 2010, p. 11).

Cultural diversity is very important for interaction even it is very important for business too. "Businesses hire anthropologists because of the importance of observation in natural settings and the focus on cultural diversity" (Kottak, 2011, p. 95). People gain experience and knowledge through cultural diversity. Landry emphasizes that; the cultural diversity can provide firms with diverse experience and knowledge (Landry, 2008, p. 42). Everybody belongs to various cultures at the same time and recognize the consequences of the phenomenon for individual behavior and social life (Lott, 2010, p. 9).

Through cultures we can distinguish societies or people from each other. According to Laroche; culture is a distinctly human feature, interactions within the group or among groups. Culture is to this society or people what personality is to an individual. Culture is something we have in common with some people and not with others. Laroche also says that culture is inherited. It is transmitted from one generation to the next through a variety of means, such as arts, stories, tales, novels, movies, and education (Laroche, 2003, p. 2).

Each group or each nation has different cultures. So the people's awareness should be increased about the diversity

and differences of cultures. People should need to pay attention to increased awareness, understanding, and sensitivity to cultural differences, cultural difference is found in every nation-state, in the context of international relations, in the workplace and in the daily lives of all peoples (Naylor, 1997, p. 4). "Culture specifies a range of attitudes and behaviors that are considered acceptable in specific situations. It also attaches meaning to specific reactions and behaviors and enables us to infer people's thoughts and feelings based on their deeds and words. Culture is the shared learning within a given social environment" (Laroche, 2003, p. 3). "Cultural diversity, understood as the common heritage of humanity, must be accompanied by the notion of sustainability in its various aspects, including political, ecological, aesthetic, economic, and jurisprudential sustainability" (Stenou, 2004).

Different cultures help people become members, if they want to adopt the invented tradition as their tradition (Siapera, 2010, p. 21). Townes emphasizes the importance of languages for the cultures saying that, culture is transmitted through language (Townes, 2009, p. 47). Cultural diversity can conduct peace within countries, between regions, and throughout the world. (Stenou, 2004)

Cultural identity is also very essential. Each cultural identity will be an influence on behavior to an extent that varies with context, situation, place, time, and expected consequences and sometimes it presents conflicting pressures and sometimes concordant ones, but always in interaction (Lott, 2010, p. 120).

Method of the Study

This study has two parts. First part is about general information of culture and cultural diversity. This information has been taken from secondary sources. The sources have been treated documents as a source of the study.

The second part of the study is an empirical case study. The data has been collected from the interviews that have been conducted by in Albania. The research uses Nvivo 10 in order to analyse these interviewers, all together is 12, thematically to measure up the cultural diversity today.

Culture

Culture is generally understood to refer to that part of our environment that is constructed by human beings to embody shared learning. According to the definition in 1891, culture is the incorporation of all socially acquired habits and knowledge. Culture is part of human biology. In that it is made possible by our biological equipment (Lott, 2010, pp. 10-12). Culture is a major social psychological concept; it is a social Construction (Lott, 2010, p. 16). Culture is natural biological urges we share with other people and culture teaches us how to express ourselves. We have to eat, but culture teaches us when, what, and how can we eat. Everybody belongs to various cultures at different times, in different environments, and in different roles.

Cultures are traditions and customs, transmitted through learning, that form and guide the beliefs and behavior of the people exposed to them. Children learn such a tradition by growing up in a particular society, through a process called enculturation. Cultural traditions include customs and opinions, developed over the generations, about proper and improper behavior (Kottak, 2011, p. 5).

There are some factors that are important. Race is one of the factors which plays a significant part but the most important factor is culture. Culture is the sum of those things that define us as individuals and as members of a group and, therefore, that which distinguishes us from others. Alternatively, to think and behave with cultural awareness is to establish a means of understanding and interacting with others that may transcend perceived barriers (Landry, 2008, p. 39). Shared beliefs, values, memories, and expectations link people who grow up in the same culture. Enculturation unifies people by providing us with common experiences (Kottak, 2011, p. 28).

Cultures are compared on values, world-views, dominant practices, beliefs, and structures in order to recognize and acknowledge significant differences and similarities (Lott, 2010, p. 2).

Intercultural understanding and mutual respect for cultures are essential in order to build new bridges among communities. Culture is an excellent concept. It has so many applications between nations, organizations, and communities. How can cultures help us in our daily lives? Can cultures ease our lives if we learn the cultures of others? There can be such questions. Laroche underlines that in the professional world, culture tells us what time people will likely come to work and leave, what we should do to help others, when it is appropriate to ask for help, what we should do to achieve our professional goals, and so on (Laroche, 2003, p. 6). We live in the same world with other people. For this reason, we need to learn others' cultures in order to make our lives easier. If we understand the people what they mean when they say they will come for example at 17:00. Does this really mean 5 p.m. or something 10 or 15 past 5. Some people come at exactly time that they promise, but some people never come at the promised time. For example, if you want to go somewhere by train in Russia the schedule of trains is like, they arrive or leave at 05:02, 09:13. We as Turkish people think why not at 05:00 or 05:15, but they should leave or arrive exactly at that time. Even it is said they have to leave at 05:00, they usually leave later. We can say this is culture. The people in Russia have learned or being taught they have to leave or arrive at the promised time. In many cultures people have their main meal at noon, but most North Americans prefer a large dinner. English people may eat fish for breakfast, while North Americans may prefer hot cakes and cold cereals. Brazilians put hot milk into strong coffee, whereas North Americans pour cold milk into a weaker brew. Midwesterners dine at 5 or 6 p.m., Spaniards at 10 p.m. (Kottak, 2011, p. 28). Another example that people from different cultural backgrounds may be offended by a joke

that is perfectly acceptable in another culture. These are their cultures. If we learn their cultures we will not misinterpret those people.

There are different people in one society, organization, factory, school etc. We should try to teach and to be taught about those people's cultures. For example Townes says that in order to understand the social and linguistic challenges students face, school personnel should be trained on issues of diversity and culture (Townes, 2009, p. 47). "Conservative critics of multiculturalism find in it the basis for discrimination against "whites" or the majority culture, which leads some to assume a defensive ethnocentric position, fighting against all other identities" (Siapera, 2010, p. 3). There are different concepts about cultures. For example, opportunities for children to learn on their own and in community are framed culturally. Some cultures and individuals privilege the ideal of personal autonomy and independence and play down interdependence, while other cultures and individuals place great value on social and functional interdependencies, at the risk of being judged inferior (Martin, 2009, p. 13)

We can identify cultures and investigate their antecedents, consequences, and role as mediators between variables. And it is essential that we do so, since they help us to define and understand persons and make sense of human behavior. (Lott, 2010, p. 16). Culture differs from region to region, from nation to nation, from state to state. (Lott, 2010, p. 26). Cultures can be food, dress, speech, music, the way of eating, the way of talking and the way of behaving. Cultures can be affected by socioeconomic status, religion, social class, and nation of origin, region of birth, or occupation and even by geographic regions.

Other's cultures enable us to evaluate our own culture. Sometimes we think that our culture is very good or the best. When we see other cultures we are actually able to compare our cultures with other cultures.

"One culture can't tell us everything we need to know about what it means to be human. Often culture is "invisible" until it is placed in comparison to another culture. For example, to appreciate how watching television affects us, as human beings, we need to study not just North America today but some other place and perhaps also some other time" (Kottak, 2011, p. 4). We can see different cultures within cultures. For example, African American culture is wide, diverse, and with multiple sources of pride, resilience, creativity, humor, achievement, and strength, besides African American cultures, Each Asian American group has its own history, languages, customs, beliefs, and relationship with the majority U.S. culture. As is true for other ethnic groups in the United States, there are cultures within cultures among Native American Indians (Lott, 2010, pp. 32-37).

We cannot criticize or blame people in view of their cultures. In every culture, people dress differently, the way they eat, the way they speak and the way they behave can be

different, but we need to respect their cultures. Again Lott says that the cultures of which we are a part are not likely to have independent consequences but to interact or intersect as they influence what we say and do (Lott, 2010, p. 114).

People behave in the way that they behave because of the culture they have assimilated. It may be an ethnic culture though it could equally be an organizational or professional culture that influences their

reading of and responses to the world. Without an understanding of this, urban place-makers are lost (Landry, 2008, p. 245).

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity is one of the most critical issues and problems that nations and states have. Cultural diversity is a very important issue that should be discussed and should be found solutions. "The current upsurge in interest in culture and cultural diversity does not mean that people have not been interested or concerned with the ideas of culture and diversity in the past. Rather, it means that the significance of these things in the lives of people has changed considerably" (Naylor, 1997, p. 3). Cultural diversity is a richness of a state. People are not robots. They learn different things and culture every day from their friends, neighbours and surroundings. Culture is a part of our life. According to Lott; cultural diversity is a part of the nature of human beings (Lott, 2010, p. 5).

Some people think that cultural diversity is crisis, but it is not crisis, it is a differentiation for us. The continued "crisis" of multiculturalism represents the need to keep on thinking and reformulating our ideas of cultural diversity, togetherness, identity, and difference (Siapera, 2010, p. 5). Multiculturalism is a cultural diversity. We live in the same neighborhood, in the same area and in the same world. We cannot avoid living without multiculturalism. Naylor furthermore underlines:

Multiculturalism is a term that frequently is used synonymously with cultural diversity. It generally is used whenever a multitude of cultures can be identified in the context of any human society. The world is multicultural, for it contains many cultures. All nation-states are culturally diverse or multicultural. It is precisely from this diversity that many intractable social issues and problems must be confronted by people nearly everywhere in the world (Naylor, 1997, pp. 22-23).

Some people prefer to limit the concept of culture to what is learned, shared, and transmitted within large groups such as nationalities or ethnicities. (Lott, 2010, p. 23). The concept of culture cannot be limited, vice versa; the concept of the culture should be enlarged.

Naylor emphasizes that culture underlies all the discussions of cultural groupings that make up the Diversity (Naylor, 1997, p. 2). All nation-states are multicultural; they all exhibit these kinds of cultural diversity. The multicultural

nature of modern society is reflected in the multiculturalism of its individual members (Naylor, 1997, p. 21). Cultural diversity is a broad subject that should be discussed and focused on. Psychologists usually focus on cultures of race or ethnicity and emphasis was put on the importance of the aspect of human diversity. Cultural diversity means the sum of the various kinds of difference, ethnic, "racial," or cultural, including their intersections or co-articulations with gender and also the debates, controversies, and conflicts, as well as warmth, and solidarity. By interacting with cultural diversity, our cultural identities can be constructed (Lott, 2010, pp. 5-7).

Even though there is a broad diversity in gender, color, political beliefs, national origin, and family background, members of this culture share experiences of oppression by the majority culture; special interests; language; concerns for safety; and sometimes the fear of being. Communication among those cultures and to those which newly entered it the transmission of values and practices take place. (Lott, 2010, p. 97). It is very important to learn others' cultures. We have to learn how to communicate with other people, because especially nowadays, communicating with diverse communities from different cultures means to have broader world of international trade and commerce development. This positive approach to the diversity and acknowledgement of interculturalism help companies to increase the advantage of diverse cultural knowledge by a deeper understanding of global markets. People who have backgrounds and life experiences of cultural diversity can see problems and find solutions to them from a variety of perspectives. It has been observed that, as time passed, "between-group differences began to converge and ultimately culturally diverse groups performed better than homogeneous groups" (Landry, 2008, pp. 40-44).

Strengthening of democracy and active citizen participation, encouraging respect for human rights and cultural diversity and work on human capital development offers a solid foundation for the improvement of living conditions (Xhavit Rexhaj, 2010, p. 10). There are various ways to improve and make cultures widespread: cultures can also be shared by several regions, over a continent, or even globally; cultures can be called civilizations when they are interacted widely. It can be said that each culture would display to the world its own particular innate strength or source of attraction, with the purpose of building a peaceful world civilization in which different cultures would coexist in harmony, and can each contribute its excellence to the world and compensating for each other's deficiencies. (Stenou, 2004). Each culture should preserve and protect its own culture for the cultural diversity.

Advantages of Cultural Diversity

There are many advantages of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity firstly, helps people or communities teach how to live together. Secondly, it helps to interact with each other. When people interact with each other; the interaction will bring peace and happiness. Since the nineteenth century, contacts between these regions have been more

productive, because many travelers, merchants and sailors have dialogues and interactions with other nations. Through these dialogues and interactions people learn others' cultures. Increased interaction between ethnic cultures would produce social and economic innovations that would drive the prosperity and quality of life in the cities. (Landry, 2008, p. 14). Today, individuals with appropriate culture, knowledge and skills are sought by international businesses (Inglis, 2008, p. 22). We can say that one of the most important advantages is the interaction among cultures. Cultural diversity help people interact with each other. The most successful interactions occur when nations from various backgrounds share experiences.

While interacting with cultures we learn how the people behave, how they communicate in different cultures, and we learn what they like or dislike. We avoid misunderstanding among different communities. Lott says that within cultures that we practice and learn how to behave, and what to believe and feel, in accord with prescriptions and proscriptions that were transmitted to us across time from significant others. Cultural influences continue to shape the specifics of development, beginning before birth, influencing subtle and also clear and obvious ways of doing things. (Lott, 2010, p. 16). Communicating across difference is not easy and the greater the cultural distance, the more difficult it gets. There is a lot of room for misinterpretation and misunderstanding, and a lack of knowledge of how people with different values or other cultures work. Similarly, in human terms, a culture cannot develop without diversity (Landry, 2008, pp. 5-6).

It is very important for communities or different nations to live together with peace and happiness. For example, Landry emphasizes:

London is more diverse than any city that has ever existed. There are around 300 languages are spoken by the people of London, and the city has at least 50 non-indigenous communities with populations of 10,000 or more. Virtually every race, nation, culture and religion in the world can claim at least a handful of Londoners. London's Muslim population of 607,083 people is probably the most diverse anywhere in the world, besides Mecca. Only 59.8 per cent of Londoners consider themselves to be 'White British' (Landry, 2008, p. 25).

This information shows that even though there are many different languages spoken in London, the non-indigenous communities do not have any problems in communicating and living together. People are more intercultural than they are thought. Shortly we can say, through diverse cultures we can live in peace, we can improve our interaction and finally we will increase the opportunity to travel comfortable to other countries.

Comparison of Albanian and Turkish Cultures

Each state, each city, each village, each nation, each group, even each family has its own culture. I am from Turkey. For

example, drinking several times hot tea during a day is Turkish culture, we cannot see drinking hot tea in Albania. Even though Albanian and Turkish people lived together for 500 years, still there are different cultures between them. For example, when people talk loudly in Albania, we Turkish people misunderstand those people. We think that they are fighting with each other. In fact they are not fighting, they are just talking.

Turkish people, when they meet their elder relatives, for respect they kiss the elder people's hand. This is considered very strange in Albania. It is considered disrespect in Turkey if you don't do this. In Turkey when somebody is sitting his or her legs crossed, while talking with someone, it is not good. It means disrespect towards that person. In Turkish culture, when somebody asks something, if we shake our heads from left to right, it means No, but in Albanian culture it means, Yes. If we do not know the both cultures we can misunderstand the people. Regarding meals, in Turkey when people have breakfast, it takes about 30 minutes. At breakfast, there are more than five different foods. At lunch people do not eat much, but at dinner they eat a lot. In Albania, people rarely have breakfast; they only drink a cup of coffee. At lunch they really eat well, but at dinner they do not eat much. Another culture in Turkey, if someone older than us we call them for respect abi for males or abla for females, which means like elder brother or sister. In Albania even if somebody is ten years older, they call with their names. These are some of the Turkish and Albanian cultures.

Result of the Study

I have made interviews with many students and teachers about cultural diversity. According to the interviews, the students and teachers, say that by learning others' cultures, they understand the importance of their own cultures. They say by learning others' cultures, they find it easy to live with other people and they face less conflicts with others.

The results of this study show that there have been different views respecting the term cultural diversity. It has been found out that the teachers and students have not been quite comfortable and positive regarding the cultural diversity. People gain experience and knowledge through cultural diversity. Culture is the shared learning within a given social environment. Alternatively, to think and behave with cultural awareness is to establish a means of understanding and interacting with others that may break the barriers among nations. Cultural diversity is a richness of a state. They learn different things and culture every day from their friends, neighbours and surroundings. People who have backgrounds and life experiences of cultural diversity can see problems and find solutions to them from a variety of perspectives; cultures can be called civilizations when they are interacted widely. The most successful interactions occur when nations from various backgrounds share experiences.

Discussion of the Result

It is clearly seen that people discuss and talk about cultural diversity every where. The research shows that the young generation is interested in cultural diversity. When I ask students, why they want to go abroad to study, they say that they want to interact with people and learn other's cultures. People, especially new generation have to be taught at the very early ages about cultural diversity.

According to the research and interviews I have found out that students and teachers are aware of the importance of cultural diversity. For the future stability and peace each state should provide people with information about cultural diversity and enable them to interact with other people.

Conclusion

Intercultural dialogue results from the cultures. If there is ethnicity we can say there is hardly any peace found. Peace

is needed everywhere. People should learn to live in a society. White people and black people should respect each other's culture. Since it is known that cultural diversity is considered as an opportunity for fruitful dialogues the world's cultural richness, there should be more interactions among various nations. We should take complete advantages of this richness and develop our intercultural dialogues. We need to find openness towards different cultures and accept them as they are. Honest and sincere dialogue should be established among societies in order to learn various cultures. As I have said before, cultural diversity is an essential element for culturally diverse societies. There are many things that can be learned from each culture and many things can be contributed to each culture. Nowadays cultural exchange and cultural tolerance is becoming more and more important towards each nation. We should trust in the strength of cultural diversity for the bright and promising future.

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