Social and cultural diversity paper research paper example

Sociology, Social Issues

\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

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Social and Cultural Diversity Paper

I. Introduction

I. 1 Introduction

This first part of " Social and Cultural Diversity Paper" is focused on the author's reflections upon discrimination, cultural diversity and it also explores his own biases, from the perspective that these might become challenges in practicing therapy. This first part of the paper also presents definitions about cultural diversity and discrimination, which will be further developed in the following parts of the paper.

I. 1 Definition of Cultural Diversity

The concept of cultural diversity indicates specificities of different cultures of the world that represent the uniqueness of certain populations. It implies acceptance and respect for one's culture and also the fact that all cultures are equal. Unesco treats the cultural diversity subject in the context of an

increased migration process, which implies processes of inclusion for the migrants in the countries where they travel for finding jobs and for living. The Organization sustains the necessity of promoting the cultures of the migrants all over the world, so that the local population to understand their cultural background and to respect their values. The purpose of this integration processes is to enhance the communication between representatives of different cultures, and to generate respect and understanding for other cultures (Unesco, " What Is Cultural Diversity?"). Discrimination is a social phenomenon, which results in biasing, marginalizing people who are different than the majority, in terms of: race, ethnicity, religion, gender, physical or psychical differences, sexual orientation, age, also called vulnerable groups (" Human Rights and Vulnerable Groups", n. d., p. 82). The discrimination is a result of an improper understanding of the cultural diversity. In other words, for fighting the discrimination and its results (marginalizing and biasing the vulnerable groups, offending, hurting, harming, even killing people belonging to these groups) there must be promoted the cultural diversity. Unesco is also militating for this idea, sustaining that there should be employed the innovative mass media for disseminating the importance of properly understanding and embracing cultural diversity (Unesco, " What Is Cultural Diversity?").

II. Author's Reflections

II. 1 Personal History with Discrimination

The author had experienced various discrimination episodes that treated more vulnerable groups, but he will refer to a specific episode that implied

an African American student. The writer has an African American colleague in university who is biased by campus colleagues and she is sometimes a victim of racial insults. The author of this paper finds this treatment not solely unfair, but clear hate crimes that should be punished, because they are highly impacting the African American student's personal development. The author's cultural background implies an understanding of the fact that regardless their gender or race and so on, people of the world are equal in rights and they should be treated with respect and integrated in society, by accepting their differences.

II. 2 Author's Memories regarding Cultural Differences

A group of Caucasian girls, who were also studying in the same faculty with the African American student, treated her disrespectfully, insulting her race and culture, as she walked out one day from university, by herself. As they were amused by this subject, the African American girl was embarrassed, barely hiding her tears. At that time, the writer of this paper could not react in any way, as well as many other people who were outside the university, who disapproved this behavior. Later on, however, the biased girl had become a close friend of the author, and integrated into a larger group of friends of different races or ethnicities, who were defending themselves each time slurs would come across any person from the group. The group fights peacefully against discrimination, raising awareness regarding the effects of biasing and racism upon the victims.

II. 3 Author's Life Experience in Relation to Persons Different than Him

These experiences and others similar has influenced the author of this paper to be more opened to cultural diversity, to desire to know more about the

specificities of people different than him. Whatever makes people different also gets them closer, is what the writer has learned from his interaction with cultural diversity. In the end, Caucasians, Black, Asian, etc., they are all people and they have the same emotions, feelings, aspirations. They all cry when they are sad, laugh when they are feeling good, go out with friends, love, communicate, socialize, go to parties or to work, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Another sort of thinking is unjust, unfair and condemnable.

II. 4 Author's Own Biases

The author of this paper is having problems with understanding homosexuality, and this represents his single bias. Although he never slurs, offends or attacks people with different sexual orientation, he is not comfortable with their public manifestation. As a therapist, the writer of this paper should understand homosexuals, their feelings and their reactions, in order to confront his biases, otherwise he will have a professional problem. People with different sexual orientation might need therapy just like any other person and the author is aware of that fact that it is their right to benefit of this service. But unless the author, as a therapist, finds a solution to overcome his biases, his disapproval of homosexual manifestation, and perceiving their cultural diversity, he will not be able to offer proper, professional counseling and this might harm this vulnerable group.

Part Two

III. Subtle racism

The word Subtle Racism can be used interchangeably with everyday racism or covert racism. A subtle racist is someone who practices covert, common

place discrimination such as ignoring, ridiculing or treating people differently based on their race. The aim of subtle racism is to maintain social distance between racial majorities and racial minorities. The boundary mechanisms are assumed to be natural or legitimate and thus they are considered small and innocent. The subtle racists exhibit their behavior in their body language, speech and their isolating attitude. Some examples of behaviors portrayed by subtle racists are: treating people of the same race differently when they engage in identical behaviors; for instance, a black teacher may punish a black student for wearing a stud but ignore the white student wearing the same stud, ignoring certain racial groups like giving more attention to a white relative to your other black Indian client and ridiculing people.

III. 2 Reasons for differences in perceptions and values of members within the same ethnic group

Features of an ethnic group include shared expectations e. g. family roles, work, recreational facilities, health and also some shared values like religion, politics and concepts of achievement. In addition aspects like shared symbols, language such as music, art and language. These features result to a difference in perceptions and values of members within the same ethnic group.

Religion

People of the same ethnic group do not necessarily belong to the same religion and the fact that different religions attest to different believes this consequently results to people of the same ethnic group having different

perception and values. . Most religious people tend to develop a belief that their religion is better and unfortunately attribute this believe to commitment to their religion. Owing to the religious chauvinism which supersedes ethnicity people first are loyal to their religion then to their ethnic group. Different religious groups have different expectations and they instill different morals and values. For instance, Islam attests to Jihhad which refers to the holy war whereas Christians do not believe in war and view any aspect of war as a sin. This difference in belief trickles down to the values held by the people.

Social Class

The society is stratified into classes based on many factors but the most prevalent is socio-economic status. The classes are high, middle and low class and different classes have their own values and also perception. In reality every class has its own culture and thus, these results to the difference in values and perception of people of the same ethnic group. They differ in aspects like etiquette and mannerisms, level of education, devotion to religion amongst other aspects. These aspects impact on how individuals perceive things and the values they attribute to. For instance, the high class in a minority ethnic group is very likely to identify and associate with the values of another ethnic group that is superior. The high class has a different view of aspects owing to their exposure for Instance; they are more tolerant to other culture and religions relative to their low class counterparts who are known to be more ethnocentric.

People of different education status also have different values and

perception. Illiterate people have a very different view on ethnic, religion, gender, sex, and sex orientation. The highly educated people are less religious since they are tolerant. They are also known to be more liberal; For instance, in dealing with an issue on sex orientation the educated are likely to be neutral i. e. they are not for it or against it but basically they understand and respect peoples' choices. The high class is highly associated with politics and somehow in an ethnic group the high class is given political power. Regarding aspects like family roles this is not uniform also across people of the same ethnic group. As much as people of the same ethnic group share a common language there are some differences in the sense that the high classes embrace other languages and are mostly multi-lingual relative to the low class.

Part 3

IV. 1 How ACA and NAADAC codes of ethics will inform my practice.

ACA and NAADAC are ethical codes that share a lot in common but the key element is proper treatment of patients.

The American Counseling Association

It supports professional counselors by defining ethical standards of practice and responsibility. It addresses eight areas: counseling relationship, confidentiality, professional responsibility, relationships with other professionals, evaluation and assessment, supervision and training, research and publication, and resolving ethical issues. On supervision and training counselors must receive training in ethic, multicultural diversity and counseling theories this therefore gives the rationale of studying multi-

cultural diversities. There are ethical issues on imposing personal values on a client, value conflicts regarding sexual Attitudes and behavior, the problem of cultural tunnel vision, how to address the challenge of reaching diverse client population and also cultural values and assumptions in therapy.

NAADAC

It supports professional counselors by defining ethical standards of practice and responsibility involved in treating substance abuse clients within a professional setting. It addresses the following areas: Objectivity and non-discrimination, educational standards, moral codes and client welfare, sexual conduct, client confidentiality, informed consent. NAADAC basically, informs on the above areas and mostly guards on objectivity and non-discrimination and thus, as a professional counselor the author is expected to treat all clients equally regardless of any difference they might have either on value, perception or any recognizable difference.

IV. 2 Professional journals on treatment practices and cultural biases
According to the Community Integration tools journal cultural competence is the ability to relate effectively to individuals from various groups. It recommends that cultural competence should be the guiding principle in behavioral health system which is inclusive of mental illnesses and drug abuse. Cultural competence recognizes all dimensions that affect individual's personal identity. These are race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability and religion. It also objectively investigates cultural barriers to mental health care, cultural biases and stereotypes which are racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, classism and religious

intolerance. The journal has also mentioned methods of incorporating competence standards into practice and has also given an example of cultural competence in practice.

The Psychological treatment of Ethnic Minority Populations journal has given recommendations for the treatment of Asian America / Pacific Islander populations, African descent population, Hispanic/ Latino populations, American Indian population and it has given information on the four ethnic minority Psychological Associations. The journal gives therapeutic recommendations on dealing with the challenge of unequal treatment to ensure non-discrimination and objectivity.

Ethics, Competence, and Professional Issues in Cross-Cultural Counseling journal further explores the subject matter with the aim of demonstrating the generic relevance of multiculturalism to professional excellence in counseling. It explores in depth the evidence of cultural bias in counseling and further defines multicultural awareness competencies. It also gives a description of the ethical dilemma of a multi cultural counselor and explained the impact of multi-cultures in the study of psychology. The journal reckons the aspect as a " forth force". Here the journal explains the paradigm shift from mono culture to multi-culture and the need of psychology to embrace it in the psychology curricula.

IV. 3 importance of cultural sensitivity in treatment plan

The importance of Cultural sensitivity cannot be underscored since it affects the client, the counselor and the facility. The clients are affected by lacking the necessary attention for treatment and thus the importance's of cultural sensitivities are: It facilitates non discrimination and Objectivity in treatment;

to the clients it translates into fair treatment, to the counselor it entails into being ethical and to the facility it has positive impact on the image of the organization. It also results to overall success of the Psychology as an Industry and as a health facility. Cultural sensitivity also increases the probability of the counselor coming up with the right diagnosis mostly in drug addiction aspects and also do a good follow up on the patient. It also impacts on the modality of treatment a cultural sensitive Psychiatrist will be sensitive to all aspects in a client and thus will be able to give good prescription.

IV. 4 Differences in communication styles across cultures

Communication styles among cultures have diversities and a counselor needs to understand this to increase his or her professional effectiveness. Issues like use of space vary from culture to culture. In America people adhere to personal space of around 18 inches whereas Africans adhere to a smaller personal space of seven Inches. The Americans also prefer direct eye contact whereas most other cultures direct eye contact depicts a romantic relationship such issues call to an understanding when people of different cultures are relating. People also talk different languages and they have meanings for different symbols. In this regard it is thus essential for professionals to be proficient in a certain universal language. There is also a variance in how use gestures, also facial expressions and the body language. Therefore, the non-verbal language is an area that every professional should master.

IV. 5 Reasons for differential treatment methods

The major reasons for differential treatment methods are Stereo-types and

prejudice. Different diagnosis is given specific treatment but the diagnosis of mental illnesses is so much dependent on how well the doctor relates with the patient. This facilitates openness which in return assists the doctor come up with the primary diagnosis. If the doctor has any cultural bias then the clients are likely not to enjoy the same type of treatment. For instance in America, most black people receive sub-standard treatment owing to the belief that they are more prone or it is very common for them to get into drug abuse. Such a believe compromises the standard of treatment

IV. 6 Reflection on the paper

As a future counselor it is very essential to understand cultural diversity in depth identify possible personal biases regarding gender, religion, sexual or gender orientation, race, socioeconomic status, disability status, or culture. It is thus very essential to observe the ethical issues as a professional and it is mandatory to be culture sensitive to achieve the ethical issues. For medication I have learnt that people respond and metabolize medication differently and therefore it is very essential for have the correct diagnosis. This is facilitated by having a good rapport with the patient to win their trust and encourage openness.

IV. 7 Resources containing information on Cultural Diversity

The internet is one area that is very resourceful for the study on cultural diversity. It includes news, books, journal articles, WebPages and Websites that tackle the subject. In addition the library is a place to consider because of the books and academic thesis on the subject matter.

IV. 8 Steps taken to address Personal biases

The author of this paper needs to have a deeper understanding of

homosexuals, their feelings and their reactions, in order to confront his biases. To address this he should engage in studying homosexuality and also work closely with homosexuality's organization to have a deeper understanding of them.

IV. 9 Application of the Study to my practice in Future

First I will ensure that I am registered by both ACA and NAADAC and adhere to their review terms. In addition I will also ensure that I adhere to all the ethical area they advocate. Moreover, I will ensure that I try to be fair and objective while in practice.

IV. 10 Impact of the paper on of my learning on diversity

The paper has really impacted positively my thoughts on personal biases in relation to my profession. It has also assisted me in coming up with mechanisms to address my personal biases by giving me a conviction that it is necessary for my professional success.

III. Conclusion

1) Part I of this paper treated in general lines aspects about cultural diversity, stating definitions about cultural diversity. This first part of the " Social and Cultural Diversity Paper" explored in detail the author's perspective about discrimination, cultural diversity, biases and racism. The paper also explored the writer's own biases, regarding homosexuality and it explained how these biases can stay in the way of objectively practicing therapy with professionalism. Part II explores subtle racism and reasons for the differences in perceptions and values of members within the same ethnic group. Part III. Explored the role of ACA and NAADAC in informing my practice, it also consulted three professional journals on treatment practices

and cultural biases and identified sources of potential counselor cultural bias within his or her work. It also explored the differences in communication styles and a reflection on what I have learnt.

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