

Curse: having diverse ethnic identity

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



CURSE: HAVING DIVERSE ETHNIC IDENTITY Multicultural people can be defined as a people who have more than one culture in other words who grew up with more than one cultural identity. A person who grew up with more than one culture is having a mixed ethnic identity. Amin Maloof, who has mixed ethnic identity, is a Lebanese author, who born in Beirut. His father was from Melkite Greek Catholic community and on the other hand his mother was from Turkey. Also Maalouf (1998) mentions that he has lived in France for twenty-two years, (as cited in Eken, A. N. & Rodrigues, B & Atabas, H. G. & Harris, J & Gunceri, M & Bilgic, M. L. & Tack, S & Onel, Z, 2010, p. 255), which shows that he is living three different cultures, in other words he is having mixed ethnic identity. Maalouf argues that “ having mixed ethnic identity is not a curse; on the contrary, it is blessing. ” As arguments and evidences show that having mixed ethnic identity is not always blessing, it is mostly a curse for some reasons like; psychological and behavioural problems, educational and communicative problems and some problems in team work.

Having different cultural identity is having two different cultures both from your mother and father, which will come up with; both having different perspectives and which will make person to remain open-minded. Different perspectives make people to think in different ways also different conversations thus Parekh (2006) argues that “ different perspectives intended to equip individuals with the ability to converse in multiple cultural idioms, leading to an appreciation of the complexity of the truth, freedom from ethnocentric practices and the ability to learn from other cultures. (as cited in McGlynn, 2009, p. 300), which makes mixed identical people better

than mono identical people. Even though bi ethnic individuals having bad experiences like marginalizing from society and come across with racism. On the other hand also they are experiencing the positive way of having mixed ethnic identity like being open-minded. As Korgen (1998) and Ross (1996) argued that, as a result of being open-minded, people with diverse identity correspond to the situations and people in different ways, thus this makes them to have “ ability to see things from different point of views. (as cited in Abu-Rayya, 2006, p. 670). According to what Maalouf says, without any counter argument diverse ethnic identity is blessing just for having ability to see things in different point of views and being open-minded for different situations and different. In contrary what Maalouf has said, that mixed ethnic identity is blessing, in diverse team work there are both positive and negative effects of multicultural diversity but the negative effect of the diversity makes the team performance less effective than non diverse team.

With having different cultures at the same time means having various acquirements and being interested in more than one thing as mixed cultural identity provides. Thereby Bodenhausen (2009) argues that team performance will positively affected by mixed cultural members of the team which they come up with various knowledge and skills. By bringing different skills and knowledge together in the group, Somers (2006); Wrap & Mahoney (2008) argue that these differences make other people to think in more sophisticated way, which makes the team performance better. (as cited in Bodenhausen, 2009, p.) Sharing the knowledge by mixed ethnic members, there emerges a competitiveness that will increase the performance in the team (Launt & Philips, 2007). Because of these reasons in the group each

member of the team will complement each other and it will end with the increment of the team performance. In contrary to this positive situation, there are bad effects of having diversely ethnic members in the team. Triandis (1960) argues that interpersonal problems and communicative difficulties have occurred by cultural diversity in the group, which does affect the performance negatively.

Additional to this Kirchmeyer & Cohen (1992) indicate that this communicative difficulties bring to an end to the emotional conflicts. This communication problem and emotional conflicts or generally conflicts within the group are because of not having a common, exact culture. Moreover Pfeffer (1983) says that the reason for these problems are “ having fewer shared experiences, having less in common and expressing more difference of opinion. ” (as cited in Collin & Tagesson, 2008, p. 24). Because members express their selves in different way, they will be misunderstood by the other members of the team, and even because they do not have in common much; like culture or experiences; they will come across with a communication problem. As a result of these, O’Reilly, Cardwell, and Barnett (1989) claim that these problems will “ threaten the cohesiveness of the team” (as cited in Collin & Tagesson, 2008, p. 224). In these circumstances, performance of the diverse team will be much lower, when it is compared with ethnically homogenous team. Beside mono cultural identity; multicultural identity enables people to compose their own identities but while composing, some problems emerge like; not forming a coherent identity because of the result of acculturation, also undermining the national identity. Sen (2006) “ rejects a plural mono culturalism that essentializes

identity in favour of multicultural practice that endows the freedom to cultivate reasoned choice of identity priority (as cited in McGlynn, 2009, p. 00). In contrary to blessing part of having diverse ethnic identity, there is an issue that called acculturation which is the “ exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact. ” This acculturation may cause culture shock or acculturation stress while identifying yourself. In other words Jensen (2003) says, in forming a coherent identity, people come across with difficulties because of acculturation.

They are having paradox because of the cultures’ various requirements. Thereby, they cannot properly decide which one to own or which one to not so, they mess up and then with the identity confusion they are marginalized from homogenous society. More over because of multiculturalism; Uberoi (2008) claims that “ multicultural policies sometimes make people to focus on their cultural identities instead of their national one, thus making the latter unimportant to them. Having multicultural identity bridges the cultures and makes these cultures develop but on the other hand it has negative effect on identity which are cultural shock and acculturative stress; which is not blessing but it is cursing for a person who has diverse ethnic identity. For the positive side of having diverse ethnic identity Parekh argues that “ no single culture can embody all that is valuable in human life nor develop the full range of human possibilities. ” (as cited in McGlynn, 2009, p. 00) In other words, cultures correct and complement each others’ both mistakes and missing and also expand each others’ perspectives by bringing different cultures in one body, which shows that they are bridging each other. More

over multicultural identity help humans to develop their selves by learning from others. But in contrast to this, bridging and complementing the cultures, it affect people negatively and it brings acculturative stress and cultural shock both behavioural and psychological way. While trying to bridge cultures it come up an end with behavioural and psychological problems because of identity confusion.

By identity confusion Arnett claims that “ substance use, prostitution, armed aggression, and suicide” have emerged in multicultural individuals. (as cited in Jensen, 2003, p. 194) Because diverse ethnic individuals sidelined by the society, they are having some psychological problems like; “ low self-esteem, feelings of anxiety, depression, guilt, despair, hopelessness” (Brown (2001); Moyotshi (1990), as cited in Abu-Rayya, 2006, p. 669) also the feeling of ambivalence over their personal, racial, or ethnic identity (Brandell (1988); Brown (1990); Pinderhuges (1995), as cited in Abu-Rayya, 2006, p. 69). For example; Abu-Rayya mention about Arap-European children who are the having both Arabic and European culture together, “ which may subject them to psychological maladjustment and disturb their personal and ethnic development. ” More over Abu-Rayya says that as a minority group in the mono-ethnic Arabs, they live as scattered individuals and “ may be perceived as a threat to the continuity of the ethnic and cultural structure(s) of the Arab group” which this threat may surrender them to social exclusion.

Although the social exclusion or any behavioural or psychological problems, multicultural education is more effective in culturally integrated school, however less parents choose these integrated schools. Reich (2002) indicates that multicultural education is more effective in schools which are

culturally integrated (as cited in McGlynn, 2009, p. 301). According to McGlynn it is effective but it is “ frequently highly contentious. ” Children are not attending to integrated schools because of their parents.

In Northern Ireland, education system remains separate, McGlynn claims that: “ with children either attending Catholic maintained schools or de facto Protestant controlled schools. Parents are against to integrated school in Northern Ireland; under 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order to government has a duty to meet the needs of parents requesting integrated education and provides two types” (p. 301), both integrated schools and controlled schools According to NICIE (2008) only 6% of the pupil population attend integrated schools (as cited in McGlynn, 2009, p. 01). This shows even the education is better in integrated, diverse schools; parents do not want their children to study in those schools because of the other problems. As a conclusion, Amin Maalouf, who has ethnic diverse identity, has said that having mixed ethnic identity is blessing; but as evidences shows that it is not blessing it is cursing because of the behavioural and psychological problems, having difficulties in education, decreasing the team performance and problems while creating the identity.

So; having diverse ethnic identity is not blessing, it is cursing.

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