

Multicultural psychology

Psychology



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If this was a perfect world everyone would be able to cohabit with proper understanding, no stereotypes, and no wars. But since we live in a world where people are judged because of their culture, their religion, and even the way they dress, we have researchers that investigate why people react to stimuli certain manner. Those researchers who investigate these phenomena are multicultural psychologist. This paper will discuss what is what multicultural psychology is, provide a brief history of multicultural psychology, and provide a rationale for the establishment of multicultural psychology as a subspecialty of psychology.

Multicultural Psychology Some people may wonder what a multicultural psychology is. According to Webster dictionary multicultural is relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures (Webster. com). Psychology is defined as the study of mind and behavior in relation to a particular field of knowledge or activity (Webster. com). Therefore multicultural psychology is the organized study of each and every aspect of an individual's activities as it occurs in the environment inhabited by diverse cultural backgrounds interacts with each other.

It focuses on behavior those different thought processes of individuals, the environment that surrounds them, what makes an individual's behavior normal or abnormal, and how the different items correlate. Significant concepts of multicultural psychology include race, ethnicity, and culture (Hall, 2010). According to Webster a race is a group is a diverse population of individuals distinguished from other individuals (dictionary. com). Most of the perception that defines an individual race are those based on skin color, skin texture, descent, heredity, and nationalized origin.

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Race is a specific ethnic group and is often debatable due to their political and sociological uses and implications (Hall, 2010). Culture is defined as the value in an individual or civilization that arises from a concern for what is regarded as brilliant in arts, script, behavior, academic pursuits, etc (dictionary. com). An individual culture is determined by the action that they partake. According to dictionary. com ethnicity is a group of people whose members identify with each other's traits, background, allegiance, or association.

Even when an individual is slightly different in culture they share a common bond or several traits that link them together with the people that are a part of their race or ethnicity. A Brief History of Multicultural Psychology In order to understand the concept of multicultural psychology, you first have to understand the origin of psychology. It has been cited that the oldest experiment of psychology dates back to ancient Egypt. A king wanted to figure out if the people of Egypt were the first civilization on the planet which started the thought processes. The origin of psychology comes from the thought of physiology (Bantwal, 2000).

The main influence was William Wundt; he wanted to apply disciplined experimental methods of knowledge to the study of an individual's perception. After Wundt there were several schools of thought that came forth that supported and challenged Wundt's perceptions. In 1883, Stanley Hall established the original psychology laboratory in the United States at Johns Hopkins University. Several thoughts like behaviorism developed by John Watson changed the movement of psychology by believing that a person's behavior

was not the consequence of inner mind processes, but relatively the effect of usual reaction to stimuli from their surroundings (Bantwal, 2000).

During the first half of the twenty century, a ground-breaking discipline of thinking, identified as humanistic psychology emerged throughout the last half of the century. Multicultural psychology came about because even though all of these perceptions and thoughts were groundbreaking they have overlooked the idea of culture playing a major aspect in the study of human thought. According to Hall, when culture has been studied in psychology there has always been a very sample. People of minority are linked together to increase the sample size and are not seen as individuals.

The uniqueness of each race and individual is not taken into account (Hall, 2010). Because of the lack of knowledge and representation of minorities in research studies multicultural psychology was formed. Multicultural Psychology as a Subspecialty of Psychology The rationale for the establishment of multicultural psychology is to produce and relate psychological knowledge to amplify the perception of multicultural issues in both domestic and global contexts. According to Landy, psychology has been color blind.

Even though minorities have been used in some of the experiments there has not been enough to get a clear understanding of each culture. This color blind approach does not recognize that there are clear differences that define each individual person's uniqueness (Landy, 2009). Minorities tend to be lumped together as one even though individuals have different cultures, class status, and race. For example, if a person of Native descent, African descent,

and Mexican descent were involved in a study, these people would not be considered as being three separate cultures.

The researcher would group these participants as the minority fraction and would not take into consideration that there are differences. There are so many perceptions and stereotypes that exist about different cultures, multicultural psychology is a way to address the individual differences that exist in each culture. In my findings in developing this paper, I believe that multicultural psychology is an excellent option that has been added to the field of psychology but I do not believe that researchers get to the root cause of the issues that surround these individual cultures.

Every culture has a defining moment in history that shapes it and it changes from generation to generation. I believe that this study has gotten a great start but still has a long way to go. Conclusion Multicultural psychology is the study of cultural and collective influences on the reaction to stimuli. Because of the perception of multicultural psychology it makes it different from any other field of psychology because it includes research on the behavior of each race as an individual, this study does not assume that the stereotypes of each culture are true but goes deeper to achieve a clear understanding of the people and their environment.

Multicultural psychology as a study is needed because even though minorities were included in research studies they were grouped as one individual group. It was not taken into consideration that yes even though there may be a common bond, each culture is a different race, has ethnic origins, and has different beliefs.