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Research Article

Reducing Ethnocentrism through Multiculturalism and Social Learning in Multicultural Societies

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ABSTRACT

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is centrally important and is superior to other cultures, and influences how people would communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds in a multicultural society. This study describes the perceptions of criminology faculty and students towards reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and social learning. This quantitative descriptive research determined the perceptions of 50 purposively selected faculty member and 125 criminology students from selected universities in Metro Manila towards reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and social learning. The researcher-developed questionnaire was administered online using Google Form. Data privacy and confidentiality were considered during the conduct of the entire study. Data were analysed using frequency and percentage distribution, mean, and rank. The majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 and younger. The respondents were dominated by males, and were singles. The majority of student respondents were in the first year. The majority of faculty respondents have master's degree and 1- 10 years of teaching experience, and were regular/permanent employees. In terms of monthly gross income, 25 or 50% of faculty respondents earn P 30,000- 39,999.00. The majority of the faculty and criminology students believed that ethnocentrism can be reduced through multiculturalism and social learning, such that, social learning can be activated through self-awareness to tolerating differences to appreciating the benefits of differences. As gleaned from the study, ethnocentrism can be reduced by modeling an open-minded and accepting organizational climate amidst cultural diversity and complimenting social learning in developing social intelligence, promoting mutual respect, and active listening that leads to intercultural collaboration in this culturally diverse police force and societies.

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Keywords: *ethnocentrism, multiculturalism, social learning, multicultural society*

Background

Ethnocentrism is a reason by which a group of people believed it had always occupied the highest point not only among contemporaneous peoples and nations, but also concerning all peoples of the historical past (Hofman & Kovalev, 1989). Ethnocentrism is held to be an integral part of human beings' society (Nioroge & Kirori, 2014), coined by Sumner (1906) in the early twentieth century, the term can be defined as a phenomenon in which each person's group is in the center while other cultures revolve around it (Shakeebae et al., 2017). Ethnocentrism occurs when unconscious values drive behaviours, so the root of the problem results from values. It is a belief that one's own culture is centrally important and is superior to other cultures (Taylor, 2006; Dasig, 2017) as a frame of reference to judge other cultures, practices, behaviours, and beliefs (Shala, 2014; Levine, 2017) instead of using the standards of the particular culture involved (McCornack et al., 2017; Gabon, 2021) thus, it influences how people would communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds in a multicultural society (Soriano, 2021; Butcher & Haggard, 2009). Ethnocentrism is often viewed negatively related to racism, stereotyping, discrimination, or xenophobia (Hooge, 2008). Ethnocentrism has both positive and negative potential, functions and dysfunctions (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) such that, ethnocentrism is a major factor affecting the understanding of intergroup communication (Neuliep et al., 2001) and heavily influence how people would communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds (Lin & Rancer, 2003a).

Consequently, ethnocentric people tend to use their culture as a benchmark against other cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) Studies shown at the universal and some degree ethnocentrism experienced by all members of society (Neuliep et al., 2005). Other consequents of ethnocentrism were becoming a barrier to effective communication (Taylor, 2006) found that men were more ethnocentric and less willing to communicate intercultural than women. Also,

as exemplified by the study of (Lin & Rancer, 2003), Korean students and Chinese students were significantly less ethnocentric and less willing to communicate intercultural than American students (Butcher & Haggard, 2009). As gleaned from these studies and consequents, insights can be drawn to reducing ethnocentrism in a multicultural society through multiculturalism and social learning at a more specific and practical level particularly in higher education institution (Austria et al., 2015; Cuyugan et al., 2017).

The problem of reducing ethnocentric behaviour in educational settings such as universities is complex because it involves both thinking and feeling (Martin, 1987). Today, educational settings are greatly shaped by the effective cultural diversity management, cultural sensitivity, and its stakeholders' intercultural communication competence (Gabon, 2021; Pahayahay et al., 2017). In the lens of multicultural society and educational sphere, increasing individuals' social intelligence could help promote mutual respect, active listening and intercultural communication competence (Kaya et al., 2021). People fear cultural differences, such that, the need to help other people not only express openness towards different cultures, but also express openness to the possibility that differences can be positive must be considered in the discourse, such that, intercultural collaboration should be advanced to bring great benefits through social learning (Dong & Collaco, 2008; Dasig et al., -; Valderama et al., 2018).

Social learning is a learning process and social behaviour that proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1971). Accordingly, (Laland, 2004) posited that most personality theories depicted behaviour as impelled by inner forces in the form of needs, drives, and impulses, often operating below the level of consciousness, as such, social learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor

reproduction or direct reinforcement (Bandura, 1963). Additionally, the increasing discourse over cultural diversity management using social learning has significantly been given attention (Reed et al, 2010) including the observation of behaviour since learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement (Renzetti et al, 2012). More importantly, social learning provides a comprehensive model that accounts appropriate model behaviours (Triandis, 1990; Dasig et al 2017) in a wide range of learning experiences in a multicultural society (Bandura, 1977; Gabon, 2021).

Accordingly, multiculturalism and social learning can reduce ethnocentrism when the following are advanced in any setting in the society such as:

1. It is important to acknowledge the advantages or disadvantages you have of your ethnic origin.
2. Recognize your ethnocentric attitudes and how strong they are, and be willing and be open to modify your actions and attitudes as needed, and understanding the need for change.
3. Learn to appreciate differences, when people around you act differently, do not assume they are making a mistake.
4. Interact with members of a different ethnic group and ask questions to gain more understanding about their practices.
5. Be educated with other ethnic group practices. Read, attend lectures, presentations, and training sessions designed to help interaction between different ethnic groups.
6. Always seek and try to understand before trying to make you understood. When needed, restate or reframe questions and comments from the other person's point of view to gain a greater understanding.
7. Always speak up and thrive to use appropriate methods, identify stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination when they occur.
8. If managing a team, regularly review your team's norms, goals, and expectations to determine if they are built on inclusion and pluralism or if a subgroup has formed

that tend to dominate other members in the group, and be open to adjustments as needed.

9. Research about traditions and lifestyles from other countries; when you keep an open mind to new or different things it's easy to learn to appreciate cultural diversity.
10. Don't forget that people from a different culture would have other customs, beliefs, values, or traditions that we should respect, never make any assumptions.
11. Always keep in mind the golden rule "treat people the way you want to be treated", respect shall always prevail.
12. Implement and embed training for individuals' social intelligence to help promote mutual respect, active listening (Dasig Jr., 2014) and might lead to intercultural collaboration.
13. Avoid taking offense. If you are aware that the comment you are about to make may be offensive, take a moment to determine another way to say it or frame the comment or question in terms of better understanding and intent not to give offense.

This study focused on the perceptions of criminology faculty and students towards reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and social learning and it is anchored on the findings of (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) that state "ethnocentric individuals may choose not to communicate with someone from another culture because they see this culture as inferior to their own." As such, it would be of great significance that faculty and students will undertake social learning and multiculturalism endeavours to accelerate cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural communication competence. The results of this study can be used by the higher education institutions to developing programs and transition to a psychologically safe environment for practicing new behaviours, to create a culture where openness is prominent and there is positive diversity.

Methodology

A quantitative descriptive research design (Dasig et al, 2017; Valderama, 2019; Gatpandan et al, 2017) was used to determine the perceptions of criminology faculty and students from selected universities in Manila towards reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and social Learning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Convenience sampling (Dasig & Pascua, 2016; Dasig, 2014) was utilized to gather the perceptions of 50 faculty member from the College of Criminology, and 125 Criminology students using the researcher-developed questionnaire administered online using Google Form. Data privacy and confidentiality were considered during the conduct of the entire

study. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, mean, and rank (Gabon, 2021; soriano, 2021).

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The majority of the respondents 100 or 57 % belong to the age group of 20 and younger. The respondents were dominated by males comprising of 125 or 71% and 50 or 29% were females respectively. The majority of the respondents 135 or 77% were singles and 36 or 21% were married, and a very small 4 or 2% were widowed/widower.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the Respondents

Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 and younger	100	57
	21- 30 years old	25	14
	31- 40 years old	23	13
	41- 50 years old	10	6
	51- 60 years old	11	6
	61 and older	6	3
Gender	Male	125	71
	Female	50	29
Civil Status	Single	135	77
	Married	36	21
	Widowed/Widower	4	2
Year Level	First Year	55	44
	2nd Year	33	26
	3rd Year	25	20
	4th Year	12	10
Highest Educational Attainment	Doctorate graduate	9	18
	MS/MA Graduate	34	68
	Bachelor's Degree Graduate	7	14
Years of Teaching Experience	1- 10 years	21	42
	11- 20 years	15	30
	21- 30 years	8	16
	31- 40 years	6	12
	41- 50 years	0	0
	51 or more years	0	0
Status of Employment	Regular/Permanent	38	76
	Contractual/ Probationary	12	24
	Project-based	0	0

Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Monthly Gross Income (P)	More than 100,000.00	0	0
	75,000- 99,999.00	2	4
	50,000- 74,999.00	7	14
	40,000- 49,999.00	11	22
	30,000- 39,999.00	25	50
	20,000- 29,999.00	4	8
	10,000- 19,999.00	1	2

N= 175

The majority of student respondents 55 or 44% were in the first year and 33 or 26% were second year level, 25 or 20% were third year level, and a small percentage of 12 or 10% were fourth year level students. The majority of faculty respondents 34 or 68% have a master’s degree and 9 or 18% has a doctorate, and a small 7 or 14% were college graduate. The majority of the respondents 21 or 42% have 1- 10 years of teaching experience and 15 or 30% has 11- 20 years of teaching experience, 8 or 16% has 21- 30 years of teaching experience and a very small 6 or 12% has 31- 40 years of teaching experience. The majority of the respondents 38 or 76% were regular/permanees and 12 or 24% were contractual/probationary employees. In terms of monthly gross income, 25 or 50% of faculty respondents earn P 30,000- 39,999.00, 11 or 22% earn P 40,000- 49,999.00, 7 or 14% earn 50,000- 74,999.00, 4 or 8% earn 20,000- 29,999.00, 2 or 4% earn 75,000- 99,999.00, and a very small 1 or 2% earn 10,000- 19,999.00.

Perceptions of the Respondents on Reducing Ethnocentrism through Multiculturalism and Social Learning

Table 2 represents the perceptions of criminology faculty and students towards reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and

social learning in higher education institutions in the National Capital Region.

Generally, 175 respondents rated their perceptions at an average mean of 2.89 interpreted as agree. This implies that criminology faculty and students believed that ethnocentrism can be reduced in an organization by modeling an open-minded and accepting climate (Dasig et al., 2017) amidst cultural diversity and complimenting social learning to inculcate social intelligence, promote mutual respect, and active listening (Dasig, 2014) that lead to intercultural collaboration.

Among the 13 statements about reducing ethnocentrism through multiculturalism and social learning, ranked 1 was the item number 3- *Learn to appreciate differences, when people around you act differently, do not assume they are making a mistake* with the highest mean score of 3.34 interpreted as strongly agree. The majority of the respondents believed that reducing ethnocentrism can be drawn from personal awareness to and tolerating differences to appreciating the benefits of differences. Reducing ethnocentrism can be done through self-awareness; most of the respondents agree that the clarity of one’s personal beliefs and values and their differences help them understand the socio-ecological system around them.

Table 2. Perceptions of Criminology Faculty and Students towards Reducing Ethnocentrism through Multiculturalism and Social Learning

Statements about Reducing Ethnocentrism through Multiculturalism and Social Learning	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. It is important to acknowledge the advantages or disadvantages you have of your ethnic origin.	2.80	Agree	6
2. Recognize your ethnocentric attitudes and how strong they are and be willing and be open to modify your actions and attitudes as needed and understanding the need for change.	3.31	Strongly Agree	2

Statements about Reducing Ethnocentrism through Multiculturalism and Social Learning	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
3. Learn to appreciate differences, when people around you act differently, do not assume they are making a mistake.	3.34	Strongly Agree	1
4. Interact with members of a different ethnic group and ask questions to gain more understanding about their practices.	2.79	Agree	8
5. Be educated with other ethnic group practices. Read, attend lectures, presentations, and training sessions designed to help interaction between different ethnic groups.	2.84	Agree	5
6. Always seek and try to understand before trying to make yourself understood. When needed, restate or reframe questions and comments from the other person's point of view to gain a greater understanding.	3.26	Strongly Agree	3
7. Always speak up and thrive to use appropriate methods, identify stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination when they occur.	2.69	Agree	11
8. If managing a team, regularly review your team's norms, goals, and expectations to determine if they are built on inclusion and pluralism or if a subgroup has formed that tend to dominate other members in the group, and be open to adjustments as needed.	2.95	Agree	4
9. Research about traditions and lifestyles from other countries; when you keep an open mind to new or different things it's easy to learn to appreciate cultural diversity.	2.64	Agree	13
10. Don't forget that people from a different culture would have other customs, beliefs, values, or traditions that we should respect, never make any assumptions.	2.73	Agree	9
11. Always keep in mind the golden rule "treat people the way you want to be treated", respect shall always prevail.	2.79	Agree	7
12. Implement and embed training for individuals' social intelligence to help promote mutual respect, active listening and might lead to intercultural collaboration.	2.67	Agree	12
13. Avoid taking offense. If you are aware that the comment you are about to make may be offensive, take a moment to determine another way to say it or frame the comment or question in terms of better understanding and intent not to give offense.	2.72	Agree	10
Overall Mean	2.89	Agree	

1.00-1.74- Strongly Disagree, 1.75-2.49- Disagree, 2.50-3.24- Agree, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree

As exemplified by (Chen & Starosta, 1998) intercultural communication competence plays an important role in overcoming ethnocentrism through intercultural sensitivity, as such, the higher the intercultural sensitivity, the better individuals tend to perform in intercultural settings.

On the other hand, the statement that received the lowest mean score and ranked 13th was item 9 - *Research about traditions and lifestyles from other countries; when you keep an open mind to new or different things it's easy to learn to appreciate cultural diversity* with a mean score of 2.64, interpreted as agree.

Conclusion

The majority of the faculty and criminology students believed that ethnocentrism can be reduced through multiculturalism and social learning, such that, social learning can be activated through self-awareness to tolerating differences to appreciating the benefits of differences. As gleaned from the study, ethnocentrism can be reduced by modeling an open-minded and accepting organizational climate amidst cultural diversity and complimenting social learning in developing social intelligence, promoting mutual respect, and active listening that leads to intercultural collaboration in today culturally diverse police force and societies.

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