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Assessment of world views of black and white South African adolescents: implications for cross-cultural counselling

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increasingly aware of the structural determinants of problems experienced in the South African apartheid system, and the need to place psychology in its wider socio-economic, political and cultural context (Anonymous, 1986; Biesheuvel, 1987; Cloete, Pillay & Swart, 1986; Dawes, 1986; Ivey, 1986; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; Lazarus, 1985; Psychology in Society, 1983; Steyn, 1985; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986; Turton, 1986; Vogelman, 1987). Subsequently, several strategies have been suggested for helping Black people, including the incorporation of indigenous healing practices (Buhrmann, 1977; Gardner, 1978; Holdstock, 1979; Kruger, 1974; Lazarus, 1986; Retief, 1986; Vogelman, 1987, Strumpfer, 1981).

The need to devise and propound alternative relevant help is also borne out of the knowledge that psychology is Western in origin, imported, decontextualised, non-African, and therefore inappropriate for a Third World country like South Africa (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Dawes, 1986; Holdstock, 1981; Horton, 1967; Ivey, 1986; Moll, 1983; Swartz, Dowdall & Swartz, 1986; Turton, 1986). The theories, methods and concepts of Western psychology create problems for effective cross-cultural counselling because Western psychology tends to be: (a) culture-bound and culture-blind (Biesheuvel, 1987), (b) alien to the thinking of Africans (Abdi, 1979), (c) irrelevant for the spiritual dimension in the lives of many black people

(Hammond-Tooke, 1974, 1986; Holdstock, 1979), (d) uncharacteristic of the behavior of Blacks, and often detrimental to the helping process (Hammond-Tooke, 1974) and also (e) inappropriate for the lifestyle and reality of Black people (Turton, 1986). Furthermore, Western psychology is criticised for use with Third World clients in that it (a) operates primarily within the individualistic paradigm, (b) adopts a eurocentric theory of human reality, and (c) focuses on adapting people to their environment (Anonymous, 1986).

Because of the mismatch between Western psychology and a Third World environment, counselling theory and practice in South Africa is said to reflect not only the counsellor's encapsulation in the bourgeois ideology, but an alienation from the working-class clients who are being serviced as well (Turton, 1986). Therapeutic effectiveness, in contrast, is believed to be directly related to the extent to which counsellors' value systems coincide with that of the client (Holdstock, 1981). It is thus imperative that counsellors learn about the culture and values of prospective clients (Gerber & Newman, 1980; Hammond-Tooke, 1974, 1986; Smith & Clark, 1986; van Schoor, 1986). Counsellors are urged to take full cognizance of their own values, and to be aware of their client's values, since major differences in world view might impede the functioning and effectiveness of mental health providers (Anonymous, 1986; Biesheuvel,

1987; Cloete, Pillay & Swart, 1986; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1984; Lazarus, 1985; Turton, 1986). Consequently, an understanding and appreciation of the client's world view can facilitate effective cross-cultural counselling.

Significance of World View

Although world view has been variously defined (Horner & Vandersluis, 1981; Ibrahim, 1984; Ivey, 1980, 1984; Sire, 1976; Smith, 1980), it is best understood as "the way in which people perceive their relationship to nature, institutions, other people and things" (Sue, D.W., 1978, p453). It constitutes our psychological orientation in life and can determine how we think, behave, make decisions and define events (Ivey, 1980; Sire, 1976; Smith, 1980; Sue, D.W., 1977, 1981). World views are highly correlated with cultural-background, socio-political history, and life experiences (Sue, D.W., 1977, 1981). Interactional components of a person's world view include (a) race, (b) ethnicity, (c) age, (d) lifestage, (e) gender, (f) lifestyle, (g) social class, (h) degree of acculturation, (i) education, (j) ordinal position in the family, (k) marital status, (l) geographical locale, and so forth (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1979). Therefore, whilst one might expect similarities in world view within a culture or sub-group, there will also be variations, or individual differences in world view (Ibrahim, 1984,

1985; Ivey, 1980; Parason, 1984; Sire, 1976; Sue, D.W., 1977, 1981; Smith, 1980). Counselling literature, however, is criticised for ignoring individual differences and for depicting primarily stereotypes of Blacks' experiences as well as caricatures of individuals (Smith, E.J., 1977).

An understanding of world view can be both helpful and useful in cross-cultural counselling for the following reasons:

(1) World view assists counsellors in understanding themselves and their clients from different cultural backgrounds.

(2) World view makes explicit both the counsellor and client's values, beliefs, suppositions and attributions.

(3) World view facilitates the choice of mutually agreed upon goals and processes appropriate to the client.

(4) World view provides the subjective reality which is important in gaining knowledge and developing meaningful skills (Ahia, 1984; Ibrahim, 1985; Ivey, 1980; Pedersen, 1978, 1982; Sue, D.W., 1977, 1981).

Finally, understanding of client world view enhances ethical and effective cross-cultural counselling since counsellors would be aware of imposing (a) culturally dominant beliefs, (b) paternalism, (c) condescension, (d) misunderstanding, and (e) mislabelling of such clients as "sick" (Cayleff, 1986; Ibrahim & Arredondo, 1986).

Assessment of World View

The present study was engendered as a result of recent research indicating that world view has important implications for counselling and can facilitate effectiveness in cross-cultural counselling. Kavanagh (1980) suggests that counsellor effectiveness could be significantly increased by using value orientation scales as springboards for discussion and as ways of gaining an understanding of individual clients. This suggestion was confirmed in research using the scale developed by Ibrahim and Kahn (1987) to assess world view across culture. When the scale is employed, Sadlak and Ibrahim (1986) found that a shared frame of reference is established between counsellor and client, and that the scale can be successfully used as a training tool in enhancing cross-cultural counsellor effectiveness.

In developing the Scale To Assess World View Across Culture (SAWVAC), Ibrahim and Kahn (1967) selected a

multidimensional scaling process to assist in identifying the structure of world views (Kruskal, 1977; Kruskal & Wish, 1978). The scale is based on existential philosophy and can be adapted to apply in different cultures to compare individual and group value orientations (Kluckhohn, C., 1951, 1956; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). The scale is important for two reasons. Firstly, it addresses some universal concerns in humankind, and thus compensates for the deficit of ethnocentric research (Berry, 1969; Sue, Ito Bradshaw, 1982; Triandis, Malpass & Davidson, 1973; Triandis & Brislin, 1984). Secondly, by assessing both individual and group similarities and differences in world view, the scale overcomes lack of attention to individual differences in cross-cultural study (Atkinson, 1985; Hilliard, 1985; Smith, E.J., 1977; Sue, 1983; Triandis & Brislin, 1984).

Ibrahim & Kahn (1987) suggested the following research directions for the SAWVAC: (a) to further determine its utility in general and applied fields of psychology, (b) to establish evidence of test retest reliability and external validity, and (c) to ascertain its contribution to cultural pluralism in psychological theories, not only in the United States but also internationally. Since South Africa is a multicultural society, and a clear need exists for cross-cultural professional help, it is suggested that an

understanding of world view will enhance counselling in a plural society.

The present investigation is exploratory and was aimed at two specific purposes: (a) to use the Scale to Assess World View Across Culture in a South African context and (b) to discuss possible implications for cross-cultural counselling.

In using the SAWVAC (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987), it was predicted that:

(1) There are significant differences in world view between Black and White adolescent groups.

(2) There are significant differences in world view within Black and White adolescent groups as a function of race, age and sex.

METHOD

Subjects

A sample of 200 subjects was selected from an English medium, private, non-racial school in Johannesburg. The sample was divided into two cultural groups: Black and White, with 100 subjects in each group. For purpcses of investigation, subjects were divided into two age categories; those who fall into a 12-14 group and those who comprised a 15-17 age category. Both males and females participated in the study. In the 12-14 age group there were 22 Black and 18 White females; 28 Black and 32 White males. In the 15-17 age group there were 20 Black and 25 White females; 30 Black and 25 White males. Demographic characteristics were used to describe the sample, as illustrated in Appendix A.

Instrument

A questionnaire was used to collect data (see Appendix B) and comprised two parts. The first part elicited descriptive subject data as described in Appendix A.

The second part of the questionnaire used Ibrahim & Kahn's (1987) Scale to Assess World View Across

Culture. It is a 45 item Likert scale and each of the 45 items is a self-descriptive statement allowing 5 alternative levels of endorsement from complete disagreement (1) to complete agreement (5).'

The scale identifies values, beliefs and attitudes on the five existential categories developed and proposed by C. Kluckhohn (1951, 1956). These categories pertain to a general organised conception of (a) human nature, (b) social relationships, (c) nature, (d) time, and (e) activity. The five existential categories and the range of variations or solutions postulated for each category are presented in Appendix C.

Procedure

The written, self-administered questionnaire containing demographic information as well as the Scale to Assess World View Across Culture (SAWVAC) (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987) was distributed to subjects in a classroom setting. Eleven classes of approximately twenty adolescents each filled in the questionnaire during a 45 minute school period. Data were collected over a one week testing period. Two administrators were available during each testing session to monitor the process and to respond to any queries. One of the administrators was Black and adept at African languages in case translation was required. In actual practise this proved unnecessary. The right of voluntary

participation was extended to the subjects and participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. No prompting was given by test administrators, thereby avoiding the influencing of participants' responses.

Analysis

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was selected to assess between group differences and within group differences in the Black and White groups. Data were examined by a t test which analysed significant differences in mean scores between the Black and White groups. The variables of race, age and sex were used in cross-tabulation analyses (Chase, 1967; Runyon and Haber, 1980).

RESULTS

The results of the present investigation as illustrated in Table 1, supported the prediction of between group differences in world view.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance Indicating Differences in Means and Standard Deviations of Black and White Adolescent Groups on Scale to Assess World View Across Culture

SOURCE OF VARIATION	$\bar{X}$ BLACK	$\bar{X}$ WHITE	SD	MIN. SIG. DIFF. AT 5% LEVEL
HUMAN NATURE				
1. Evil	3.39	3.03	0.62	0.17*
2. Good & Evil	3.94	3.92	0.45	0.12
3. Good	3.23	3.46	0.57	0.16*
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS				
1. Lineal-Hierarchical	2.72	2.21	0.82	0.22*
2. Collateral-Mutual	3.59	3.35	0.71	0.20*
3. Individualistic	2.73	2.29	0.66	0.18*
PEOPLE/NATURE				
1. Harmony	3.37	3.56	0.69	0.19
2. Control Nature	2.94	2.52	0.63	0.17*
3. Power of Nature	3.40	3.57	0.66	0.18
TIME				
1. Past	2.98	2.57	0.73	0.20*
2. Present	2.96	2.99	0.86	0.24
3. Future	3.20	2.79	0.74	0.20*
ACTIVITY				
1. Being-Expressive	3.07	3.19	1.36	0.38
2. Being-in-Becoming	3.79	3.78	0.59	0.16
3. Doing	3.74	3.75	0.57	0.15

* $P < .05$

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